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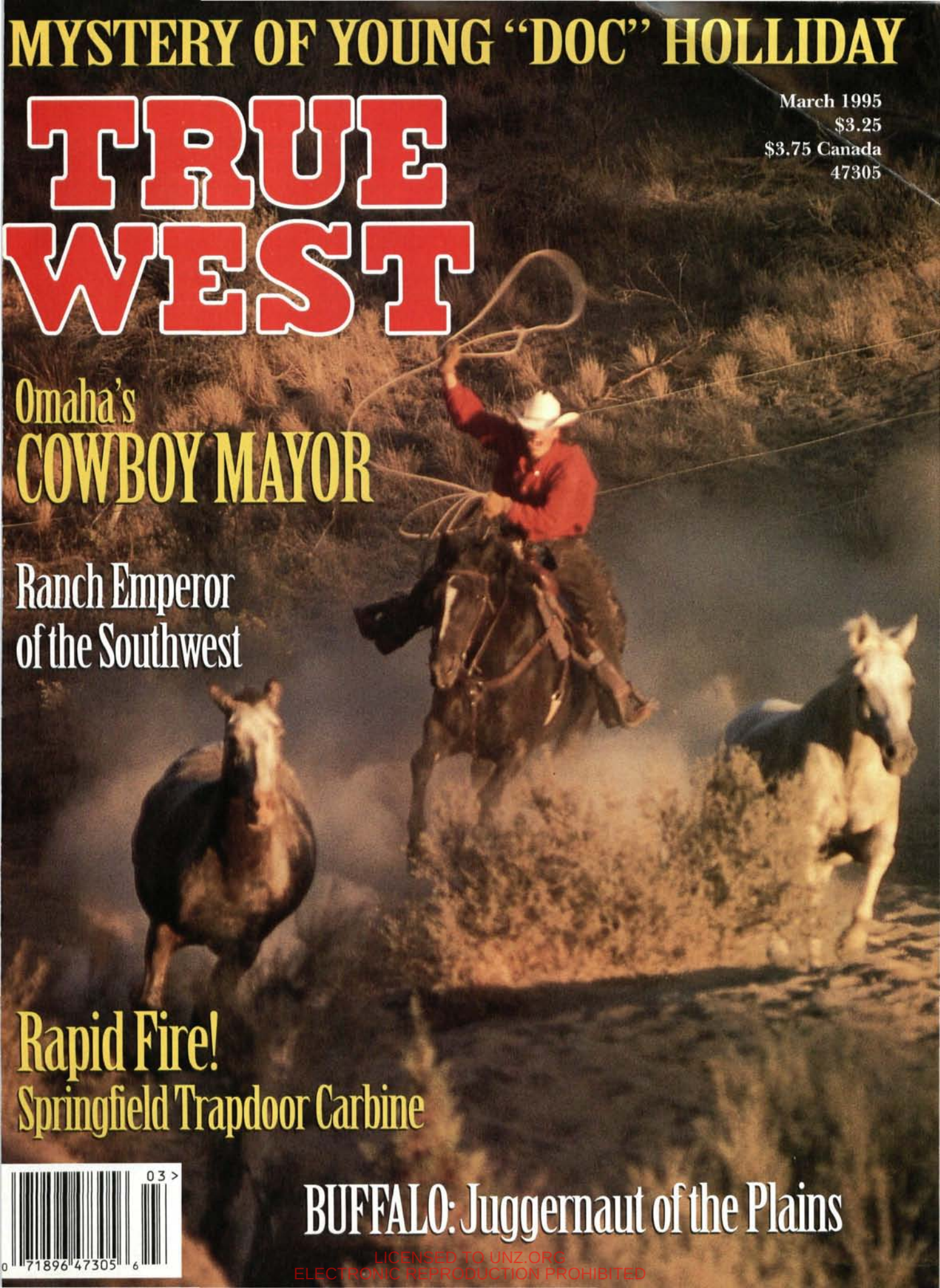

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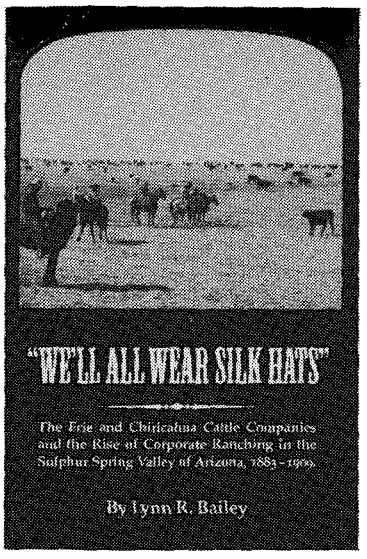

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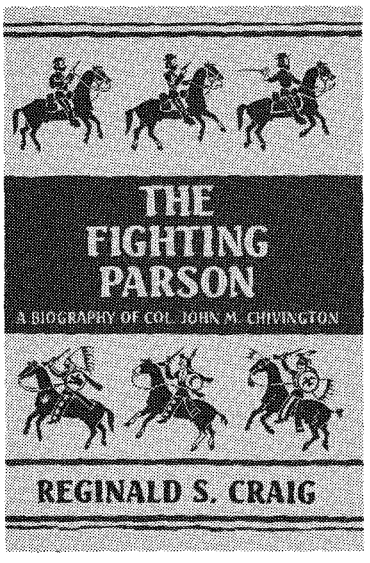

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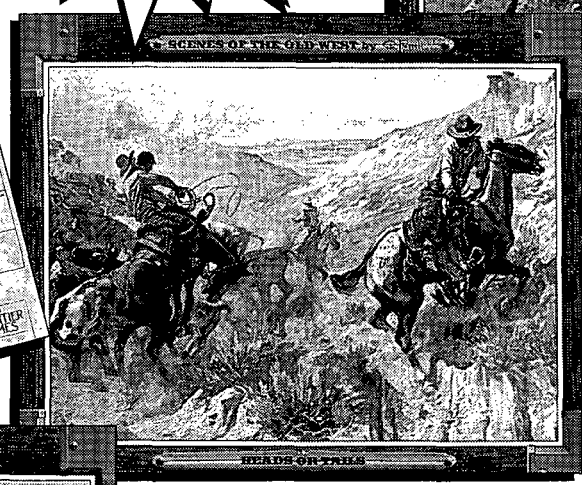

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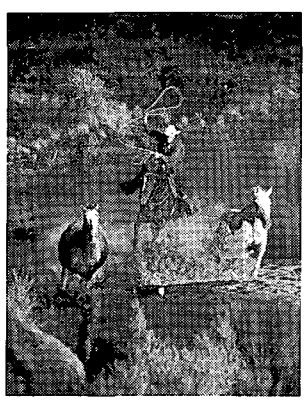

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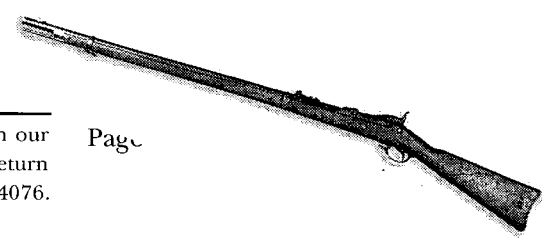

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March 1995, Volume 42, Number 3, TRUE WEST (ISSN 0041-3615) is published monthly by Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, 205 W. 7th, Suite 202, Stillwater, OK 74074. Single copies: $3.25, plus $1.25 postage. U.S. subscription rate is $23.95 per year (12 issues per year); $44.00 for two years (24 issues). Other countries, including Canada and Mexico, please add $5.00 per year to U.S. rate to cover extra handling and postage. Please provide payment in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank; personal checks, bank money orders, or cashier's checks drawn on foreign banks are not acceptable, nor is the national currency, unless the total payment is sufficient to cover all bank clearing and foreign exchange charges. Second class postage paid at Stillwater, OK 74074, and at additional mailing offices.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy, folks!

Whether it's spring calving, putting in crops, or just planting a garden in the backyard, March brings an end to the quiet contemplations of winter. But before I get up out of the easy chair and lower myself into my work boots, I have one more little bit of quiet contemplating to inflict on you all.

My quiet contemplating lately has been mostly on the fate of the cowboy. Is it not a travesty of justice that this great American hero, the universally recognized symbol of our fine country, and the subject of the finest dramas on stage and film has been denied one of the most important benefits to which he is entitled under our democratically governed free enterprise system? I refer not to government aid, not to equal employment opportunites, not to access for those physically handicapped by high-heeled, pointy-toed boots. No, my fellow Americans, I refer not even to the right to choose between the smoking and the non-smoking section. I refer to the god-given and universally acknowledged right to be studied by anthropologists and to receive all of the considerations and honors thereof.

To wit. Insofar as cowboys and Indians are inextricably linked in the national consciousness, and insofar as Indians have had to endure the exquisite pleasures of being observed under the anthropologist's microscope, it is grossly unfair and blatantly discriminatory that the cowboy has not been granted his fair share of attention from academically trained scientists.

Specifically, cowboys have yet to be properly classified. For the most part, cowboys is cowboys, and we let it go at that. But would anyone in this enlightened age have the unmitigated gall to say that "Indians is Indians"? Historians and anthropologists alike are careful to specify an Indian's tribe: Apache, Comanche, Sioux, Cherokee, Iroquois are all preferable to the generic label. And it's even better to narrow an individual down to his band within the tribe whenever possible. Then there are the carefully constructed, regional categories: Southwest Indians, Northwest Coast Indians, Northern Plains Indians, Southern Plains Indians, Northeastern, Southeastern...well, you get the idea.

But this time of year, when I'm starting to plan my summer travels, I'm always reminded of how differently cowboys really look and talk and act from one place to the next. Back in my home state of Wyoming, cowboys tend to favor the image of the Marlboro man—lean, if not downright lanky, and dressed in relatively plain clothes with a medium sized Stetson. A Wyoming cowboy would never be confused with the six-foot-six-inch-tall, robust, handlebar-mustasched feller who once concluded an otherwise wordless breakfast with me by acknowledging, "Them's good biskits...but I've eat better gravy." That gentleman, with his high-crowned and exceptionally broad-brimmed hat, his huge bandana, and his baggy canvas britches tucked into the tops of Spanish boots was unmistakeably from the Southwest.

Of course, any good cowboy can merely glance at another cowboy's duds and gear and accurately pinpoint where and when he's from. But the rest of us are blinded by ignorant stereotypes. How else can we explain that the song goes, "I see by my get-up that I am a cowboy," instead of, "I see by my get-up that I am a late-nineteenth-century, N-Bar, Trans-Montana cattle worker of primarily European-American descent"? So long as such patently offensive lyrics can continue to be sung to an unblushing public, we have a long way to go in raising our fellow countrymen's political and social awareness of things western.

John Joerschke

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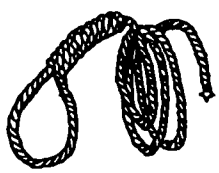

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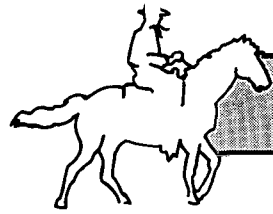

TRULY WESTERN

WYATT EARP STILL STIRS CONTROVERSY

By way of introduction, my book, *John Ringo, the Gunfighter Who Never Was*, was published by the University of Arizona Press in 1987. In it, I analyzed the myth that has developed around John Ringo and brought out the reality of a mythical figure. I recently retired as a professor of American history at San Jose City College.

I bear no personal rancor toward Glenn G. Boyer and found him helpful and insightful, but I have found much of *Wyatt Earp: Legendary American* (*True West*, August 1993–October 1994) questionable and unsubstantiated. He has published three different memoirs telling how Wyatt Earp killed Ringo, all giving different stories. In *Wyatt Earp*, by Wyatt Earp, he tells of killing Ringo on the way out of Arizona. But in a story in the *Tombstone Epitaph*, he gives a far different version, supposedly out of Josephine Earp's memoirs. In your magazine and in his book, *Wyatt Earp's Tombstone Vendetta*, he tells another version, which he says came from the hidden memoirs of Theodore Ten Eyck. That none of these versions is plausible is only part of the problem.

The version in Josephine Earp's memoir is completely different from her husband's. Why would she have more information than he did? Most troubling about this is that Mr. Boyer has never allowed other historians to study either the Josephine Earp or Ten Eyck manuscripts or—to my knowledge—even to substantiate their existence. Do they really exist? If so, has Boyer interpreted them correctly? These are troubling questions for serious students of frontier history.

In your *Legendary American* series, Boyer attributed much of his material to the mysterious Ten Eyck. Yet as far as we know, we have only Boyer's word that such a document exists. It is time for *True West* to do a true service and present this as the subject of a debate. Your magazine has served as Boyer's primary forum for dispensing his information, and your magazine should address the question of his historical accuracy. He has presented far too many items as fact with absolutely no substantiation. Now is the time for him to document and prove his sources, if he can.—*Jack Burrows, San Jose, California.*

Editor's Note: Like everything else about Wyatt Earp, Glenn G. Boyer's *Wyatt Earp: Legendary American*, has raised quite a ruckus. In general, the response, whether pro or con, has been extreme, with little or no middle ground. Even as I write this, however, Mr. Boyer is hard at work preparing a revised and expanded version of the series intended for publication in book form. That fully documented version will address the issues raised by Mr. Burrows and others in these pages and elsewhere. In the meantime, I cast my vote with Pappy Cason.

Who Stole What?

John A. Lamb's article, "Harvey Logan's Lost Journal" (*True West*, October 1994), was interesting. On a record album I have is a song called "Hell in Texas." The record's

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liner notes attribute the song to a United States Signal corpsman named John R. Steele. I am enclosing a copy of the lyrics, along with a short history of the song's origins.

The song obviously is the same as the one on the creation of New Mexico among the Logan papers; is it possible that Logan wrote it? Logan either stole some poor cowboy's song or John Steele read Logan's journal while Logan was out robbing a train. A careful reading indicates the author was good at putting words together and could spell.—*Don Ford, Douglasflat, California.*

Editor's Note: Thanks, pard! You're obviously a sharp-eyed reader with a good memory. After I read your letter, I looked up "Hell in Texas" in Jack Thorp's *Songs of the Cowboys.* It turns out to be a true folksong, its origins lost to time. Thorp tracked down at least five different versions of the song, and each was credited to a different author. Some of the versions locate the tale in Texas, others in New Mexico.

The person who transcribed the version in the Logan papers—whoever he or she may have been—probably was not the song's author but was simply putting on paper the words of a favorite song heard round the campfire or, perhaps, in a jail cell.

One thing is certain, though. A man who made a living robbing trains and banks surely wouldn't hesitate to appropriate song lyrics from a cowboy!

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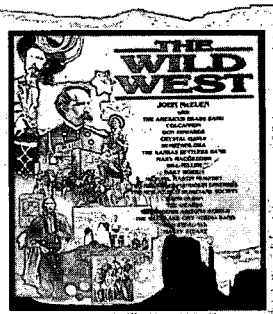

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Author's Collection

Kit Carson at the start of the Civil War, several years after his ranching experience.

THE KIT CARSON CIRCUIT

—RANCH AT RAYADO—

BY RANDY D. SMITH

Photo by Randy D. Smith

The front entrance of Kit Carson's Rayado Ranch headquarters as it appears today. The thick adobe walls provided protection during Indian attacks.

After establishing his home in Taos, New Mexico (featured in the February 1995 issue of *True West*), frontiersman Kit Carson tried ranching along Rayado Creek, fifty-four miles northeast of Taos. Although he did not attain the life of a wealthy ranch owner as he had hoped, Carson's ranching venture was successful. Today the Boy Scouts of America maintain a living history museum at the ranch's original headquarters.

The ranch started as part of Lucien Maxwell's immense landholdings. In 1841, Carlos Beaubien and Guadalupe Miranda received an extensive land grant in northeastern New Mexico from the Mexican government. Maxwell, a good friend of Carson's, had married Beaubien's daughter, and at the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846, Miranda fled to Mexico and sold his share of the grant to Maxwell. After his son was killed during the Taos rebellion of 1847, Beaubien lost interest in the grant and offered his share to Maxwell.

Maxwell asked Carson, who had developed a small spread along the Little Cimarron River to the north, to become his partner in a ranch. Carson had accumulated a cash reserve by serving as a guide and scout for John C. Frémont on three expeditions in the 1840s. He loaned Maxwell $1,000, and they began establishing a stock farm. They bought stock, seed, and supplies and, with the help of a few Mexican laborers, began making improvements in 1849.

Rayado Ranch, on the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail, was dangerously exposed to raiding Apaches, Utes, Comanches, and Cheyennes. However, the ranch's position on a small rise overlooking an extensive valley gave Carson and Maxwell a sweeping view for miles around in case of attack, and they designed their ranch headquarters as an adobe fort. Walls eighteen inches thick and eight to ten feet high surrounded a central plaza. Double walls twelve feet apart formed an area for apartments and houses. A main gate faced east and a stock gate and adobe corrals faced north. The men kept riding and chore stock in the adjoining corrals so they could quickly drive the animals into the fort in case of

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attack. A few windows on each wall faced outward, but they were barred and designed for use as shooting portals.

A small settlement, including Maxwell's family and some pioneers, sprang up around Rayado. However, because of Rayado's distance from Taos and the threat of Indian attack, Carson did not immediately move his wife, Josefa, and their family to Rayado. Josefa had just had their first child, Charles, who had been born prematurely and did not survive the year.

The United States Army established a post at Rayado to protect settlers there and emigrants on the Santa Fe Trail. Nevertheless, Indians frequently attacked the ranch. In March or April 1850, Apaches attacked and wounded two herdsmen, driving off their horses and mules. Later that year Indians knifed Rayado settler Bill New while he was working in his field, then drove off another herd of stock. Soldiers overtook the attackers, killed some of them, and recovered most of the stock.

By November 1850 the Rayado had quieted enough that Carson moved his family to the ranch. In March 1851 Carson went to Missouri to purchase provisions and merchandise and retrieve his half-Indian daughter Adaline, whom he had had with his first wife. When the army established Fort Union forty miles away and closed its post at Rayado, Carson purchased a post hospital as a home for his family.

Thrapp Dedication

The library and papers of late western historian Dan L. Thrapp will be officially accepted into the Nita Stewart Haley Library in Midland, Texas, in a dedication ceremony March 25, 1995. The dedication and a reception are open to the public.

Thrapp, author of such books as *Juh: An Incredible Indian*, *The Conquest of Apacheria*, *Victorio and the Mimbres Apaches*, and the four-volume *Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography*, died April 29, 1994. He was eighty years old.

Haley Library historian Jim Bradshaw said the library received the collection soon after Thrapp died. Thrapp had already made arrangements to donate the collection.

Bradshaw said the collection contains about 6,000 books and periodicals, as well as Thrapp's papers. "The papers are mostly background for his books," said Bradshaw, estimating they equal about sixty feet of files.

"We just have a rough inventory of the collection right now," said Bradshaw. "We need to carefully look at it, appraise it, and catalogue it."

For more information about the reception, contact the Nita Stewart Haley Library at 1805 West Indiana Avenue, Midland, Texas 79701. The phone number is (915) 682-5785.

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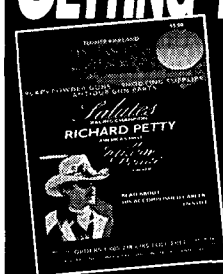

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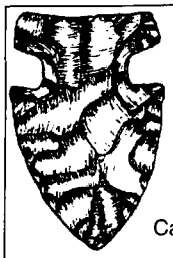

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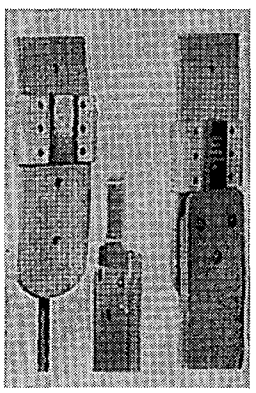

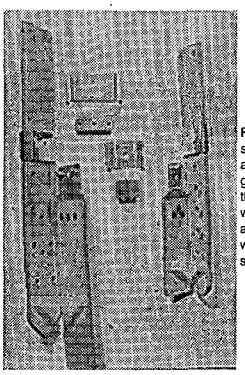

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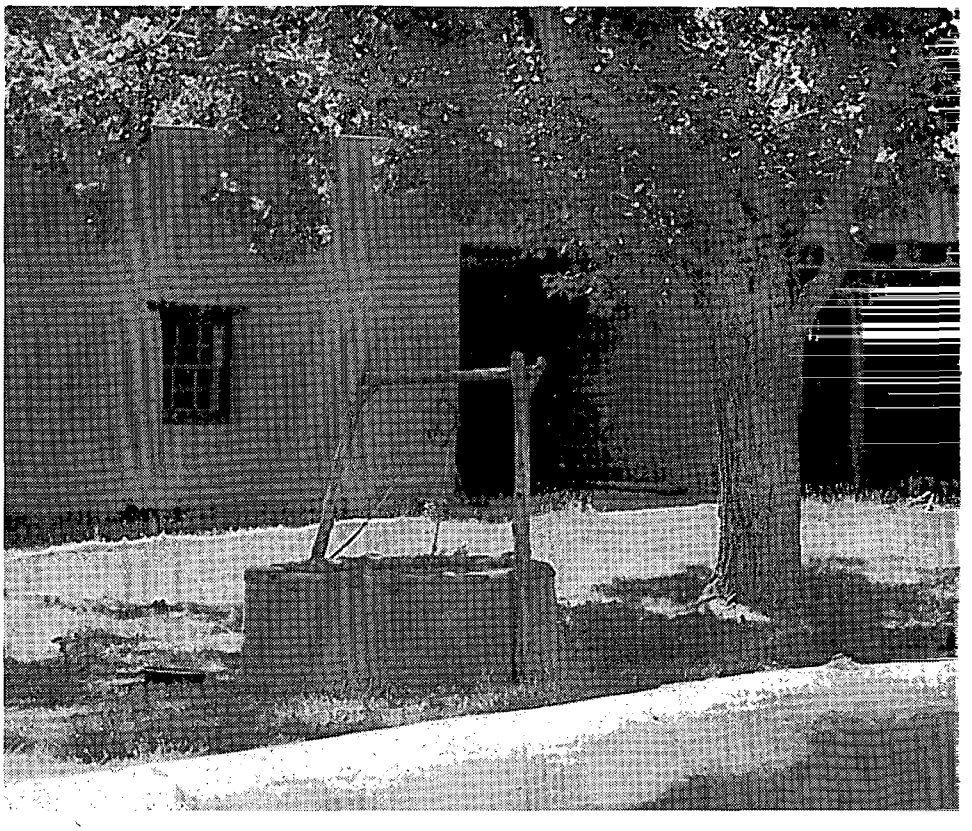

The courtyard of the restored Rayado Ranch headquarters.

Indians still troubled Rayado at times. Once several hundred Cheyennes camped at Rayado, and for two days Carson relied on diplomacy to keep peace. The Indians finally left for raids on the Utes and Apaches. Carson thought that if the raids were unsuccessful, however, the Indians might return to take revenge upon the ranch. He swiftly removed his family to his Taos home as a precaution. Carson also had to get help from soldiers at Fort Union when a Cheyenne wanted to trade horses for Teresina Bent, Josefa's niece.

The Carsons had two sons, William and Julian, while they were at Rayado. Adaline married Louis Simmons and they soon left New Mexico. Lucien Maxwell and Carson tried a trapping expedition that lost money, but the partners did quite well selling supplies to soldiers and Santa Fe Trail travelers.

In February 1853, after learning that Dick Wooton had successfully driven sheep to supply-starved California, Carson rode to Rio Abajo along the Rio Grande south of Santa Fe and purchased 6,500 sheep at fifty cents a head. The partners then organized three drives to California where they sold the sheep at a 500 percent profit. During Carson's eight-month absence, his family lived at their home in Taos. When Carson returned, he was able to consider himself a wealthy man.

Returning from California, Carson took an appointment as an Indian agent for the Utes, with his headquarters in Taos. It appeared that he had a career that would afford him a settled life with his rapidly growing family. Little did Carson realize that some of his greatest accomplishments still awaited him.

Maxwell stayed at Rayado until 1857 when he moved his ranching operation to the Cimarron River. Rayado went to Maxwell's brother-in-law, Jesus Abreu. For forty years Abreu raised cattle, sheep, and horses. His "Pear Brand" became known throughout New Mexico for high quality stock. Abreu died at the ranch in July 1900.

In 1929, Waite Phillips bought Rayado as part of his Philmont Ranch. In 1941, Philmont was given

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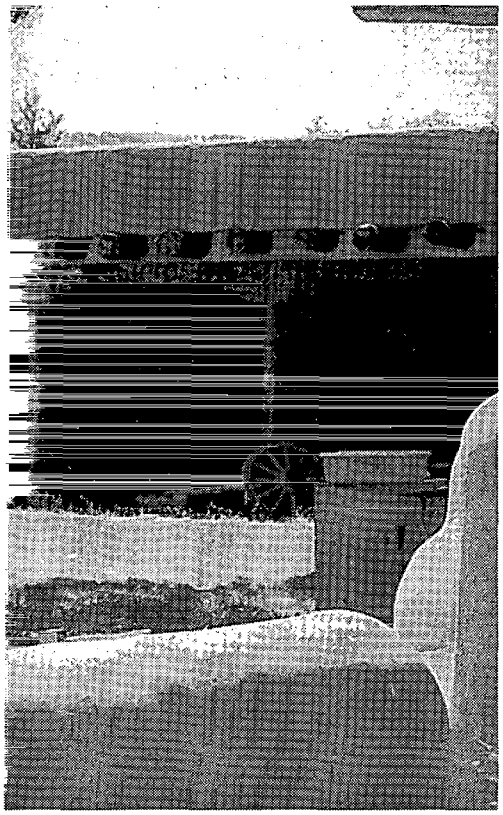

Photo by Randy D. Smith

to the Boy Scouts of America. The original ranch headquarters were rebuilt in 1949 as an authentic hacienda of the 1850s. In the early 1970s, Philmont introduced a living history format to the restored headquarters and free programs are presented throughout July and August. Blacksmithing, pioneer skills, and team handling are included in the demonstrations.

The Rayado Ranch museum is thirteen miles south of Cimarron, New Mexico, on State Highway 21. It is open June 15 through August 31, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., and admission is free. Off-season tours are available upon request. For more information call or write the director of museums, Philmont Scout Ranch, Cimarron, New Mexico 87714, (505) 376-2281, ext. 46.

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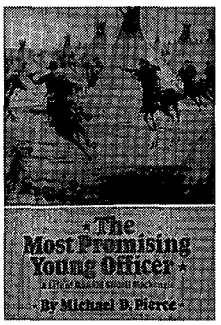

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Texas Admitted to Union

BY BILL O'NEAL

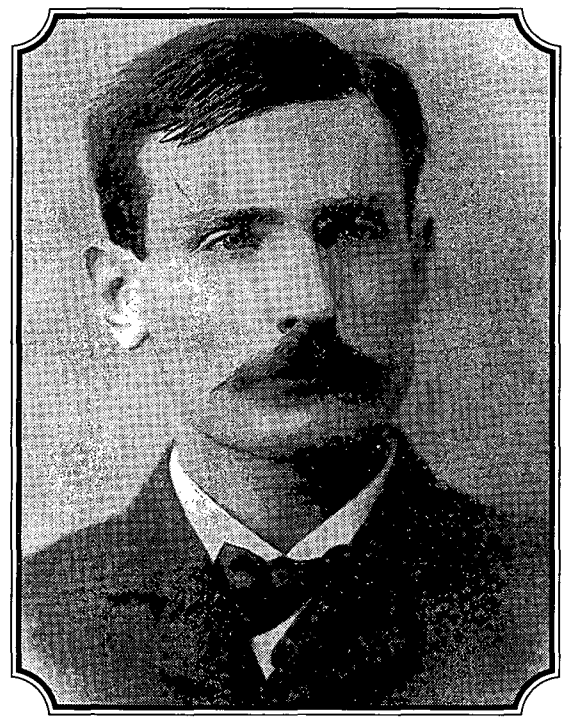
150 Years Ago

March 1, 1845; Washington, DC. In one of his final acts in office, President John Tyler signed a joint resolution of Congress annexing Texas to the Union. The unpopular Tyler, who had succeeded to the presidency after the death of President William Henry Harrison just one month after his 1841 inauguration, had pushed for the controversial annexation of Texas in a desperate but unsuccessful bid for reelection.

The Lone Star Republic had accumulated a national debt of $10,000,000, and the annexation agreement permitted the State of Texas to retain title to its public lands so it could retire the debt. Texas was the only state free to dispose of its own public lands, and it sold ranchers and farmers cheap tracts of land and awarded large land grants to railroads.

Texas' debt remained unpaid, however, until Congress granted it $10,000,000 under the Compromise of 1850, which also admitted California to the Union and tried to deal with the issue of slavery in other new states. In return for the money, the Compromise reduced Texas to its current boundaries. Surplus public lands that Texas had originally claimed would become part of five other future western states: about half of New Mexico; the Oklahoma panhandle; the southwest corner of Kansas; a large segment of central Colorado; and a strip of southern Wyoming.

March 4, 1845; Washington, DC. In his inaugural address, President James K. Polk affirmed the aggressively expansionist agenda of his election campaign. Polk proclaimed that the annexation of Texas was the business of the United States and the Lone Star State and did not concern Mexico. He also boldly stated that the United States had "clear and unquestionable" title to the Oregon country, paving the way for the acquisition of the Pacific Northwest despite British claims to the area. Two days later General Juan Almonte, the Mexican minister to the United States, protested Polk's inaugural remarks about Texas and Mexico.



Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka

Lawman Jim Masterson, who died in Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory, of "galloping consumption" on March 31, 1895.

March 28, 1845; Mexico City, Mexico. In protest of the Texas annexation treaty, the Mexican government notified United States minister to Mexico Wilson Shannon that diplomatic relations were severed. Ignoring that official threat, during the next several months President Polk completed the annexation of Texas and attempted to purchase California and the rest of the upper half of Mexico. When Mexico declined, Polk aggressively dispatched General Zachary Taylor to the Rio Grande in search of an incident that would ignite a war with Mexico.

Spring 1845; northern Nevada. In 1843, mountain man Old Bill Williams began a trading expedition which lasted for two years and had several conflicts with Indians. Williams led his men into northern Nevada in the spring of 1845, and they began to clash with Paiutes. Finally the Indians found one of the mountain men, a young Texan named Frederick Crawford, riding alone. They killed and mutilated him.

Spoiling for revenge, Williams left a few camp guards and rode at the head of three dozen angry mountain men toward the Paiutes. When they spotted the band, the white men galloped forward in a sweeping charge. Armed only with bows and arrows, the Paiutes suffered a quick rout. The whites shot down several Indians, and slaughtered many more who were trying to flee. Williams' men killed twenty-five Paiutes, captured forty-three of their horses, and recovered Crawford's mount and weapons.

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125 Years Ago

March 3, 1870; Lamar, Missouri. Wyatt Earp was appointed town constable of Lamar, his first position in law enforcement. Lamar was a tranquil farm town, but Wyatt learned how to buffalo drunks without resorting to gunplay, a technique he would employ repeatedly in far rowdier frontier communities.

March 30, 1870; Texas. With settlers and the United States Army battling Comanche and Kiowa war parties on the Texas frontier, the former Confederate state was readmitted to the Union at the end of bitter post-Civil War reconstruction efforts.

100 Years Ago

March 31, 1895; Guthrie, Oklahoma. Jim Masterson died of "galloping consumption" in Guthrie. Born in 1855, as a young man he was a buffalo hunter, like his older brothers Bat and Ed. Also like his brothers, he became a Dodge City peace officer; eventually winning promotion to city marshal. He was involved in several shooting scrapes, then spent a few years farther west.

In 1889 Jim returned to Dodge, hired his gun in the Gray County seat war, then moved south to participate in the Oklahoma land run of 1889. He became one of the first settlers of Guthrie. He served as a deputy sheriff from Guthrie, and in 1893 he was appointed deputy United States marshal. Jim was active in pursuing the numerous outlaws of Oklahoma Territory and participated in the bloody raid on the Doolin Gang at Ingalls in 1893. He developed a virulent form of tuberculosis and died at the age of thirty-nine.

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The Mystery of YOUNG DOC HOLLIDAY

By Randy Lee Eickhoff

He died quietly, attended only by nurses at a health resort in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, on Tuesday, November 8, 1887. In the end, he was alone, as he had been for the last half of his short life, and the end was a surprise, for John Henry "Doc" Holliday had never expected to die in bed. Holliday's plans called for a glorious finish: the paladin fighting against overwhelming odds, his six-gun ablaze. He wanted a romantic end similar to those of the heroes in *The Mabinogion* and *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Unlike those Arthurian knights, however, Holliday was too good for his enemies. His last words proved a fitting epitaph; with one monumental last effort he levered himself up on his elbows in his bed and gazed at his bare feet: "Well, I'll be damned. This is funny." Then he lay back down and quietly died an anticlimactic death, leaving behind a romantic legend.

Holliday was a tragic figure: an alcoholic, consumptive, gambler, and reckless gunfighter, who was, in the words of Bat Masterson, "unafraid of nothing [sic] on earth." Those gunmen who faced Holliday saw in him a reckless disregard for his own life and felt the first faint stirrings of fear that gave Holliday the "edge" he needed in his gun battles.

During his free time, he roamed the woods filled with Southern longleaf pine around Valdosta, fished the Withlacoochee River beneath hickory trees, and swam in deep pools beneath old oaks festooned with tattered streamers of gray Spanish moss, ignoring the angry mockingbirds that tried to drive him and his friends from their nests and territory.

The first account of Holliday in the West appeared in the January 2, 1875, *Dallas Herald* report of an altercation with a certain saloonkeeper named Austin: "Dr. Holliday and Mr. Austin....relieved the monotony of the noise of firecrackers by taking a couple of shots at each other yesterday afternoon. The cheerful note of the peaceful six-shooter is heard once more among us. Both shooters were arrested." Soon after, he was "invited" by law officers to leave town and headed for Ft. Griffin and his journey into legend. The legend, however, had its roots not in Dallas, but in Georgia many years before.

John Henry Holliday was born in Griffin, Georgia, on August 14, 1851, to Alice Jane (McKey) and Henry Burroughs Holliday, a farmer, land speculator, store owner and manager, and lawyer. Although his mother was a gentle person who took great pleasure in teaching children to play the piano, his father, the Major, was high-strung and hot-tempered, traits that his son would inherit. The Major's short tour as quartermaster of the Confederacy's Army of the Potomac ended when he was discharged after suffering "Chronic Diarrhea [sic] and general disability." He returned home and, finding the area around Griffin to be suffering heavily from the war, moved his family early in 1864 to a 2,450-

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acre farm seven miles northeast of Valdosta, Georgia. He had purchased the farm from the estate of James D. Shanks for $31,500 on February 9. Later, he would buy 980 acres more from the Shanks estate for $3,150.

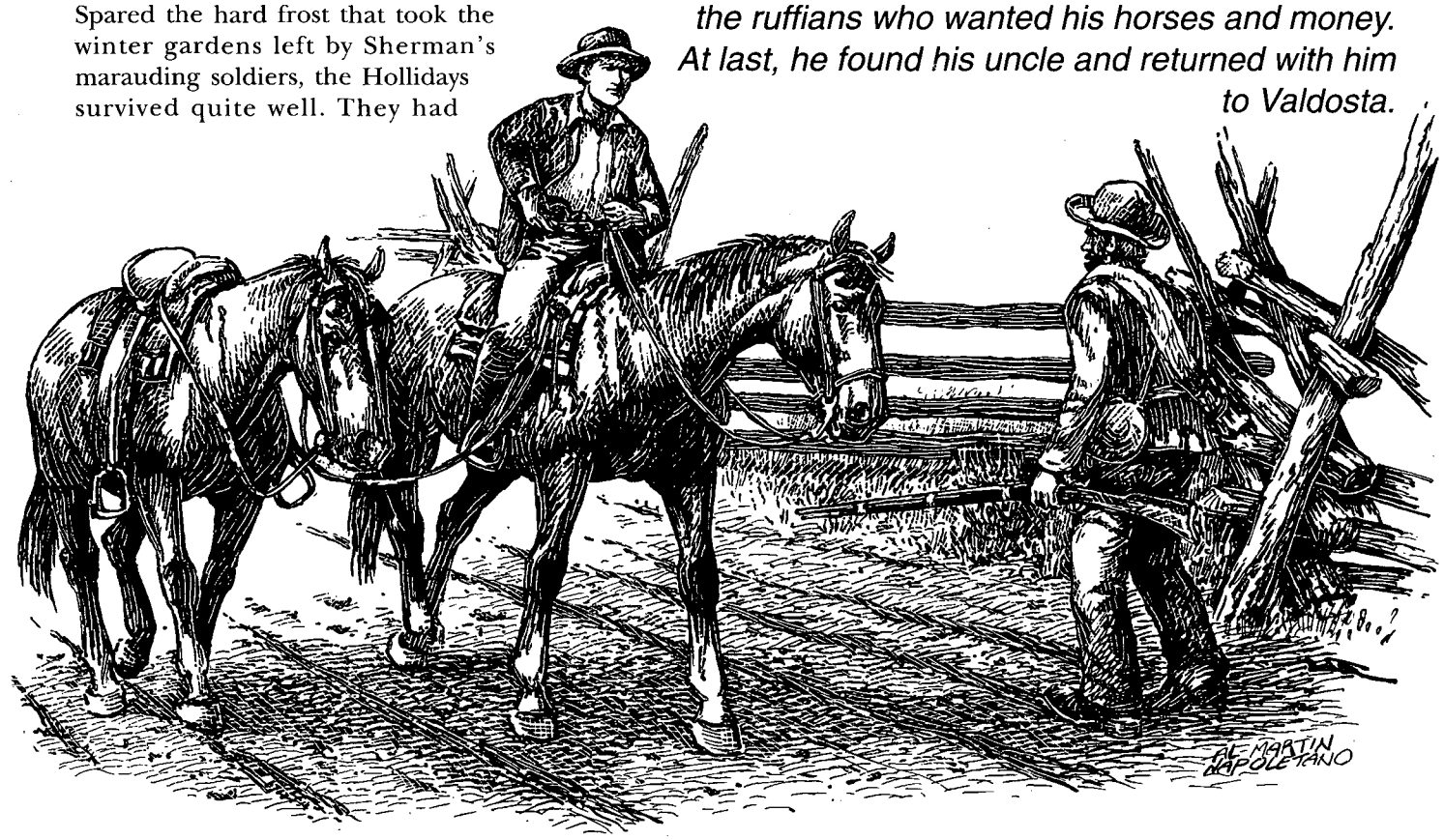
There, young Holliday grew up, attending the newly-formed Valdosta Institute for educating the sons of southern gentlemen. He easily made his way through an old-fashioned curriculum that included a sound background in the Classics, French, Greek, and Latin, and ethics and calculus. During his free time, he roamed the woods filled with Southern longleaf pine around Valdosta, fished the Withlacoochee River beneath hickory trees, and swam in deep pools beneath old oaks festooned with tattered streamers of gray Spanish moss, ignoring the angry mockingbirds that tried to drive him and his friends from their nests and territory.

It was a hard time for most of the South, but the Hollidays lived far off the line of General William Tecumseh Sherman's notorious march through central Georgia to Atlanta. Spared the hard frost that took the winter gardens left by Sherman's marauding soldiers, the Hollidays survived quite well. They had kale and collards during the winter and snap beans and beets and turnips in the early spring.

Holliday, however, was a restless young boy, and when he discovered that his favorite uncle, Thomas, his mother's brother, was missing, he took two horses from his father's stable, a pistol and a few coins, and headed north to find his uncle and bring him back. The roads were filled with deserters, road agents, and homeless men desperate enough to kill a young boy for his possessions. But Holliday rode through the days along those roads, coolly showing his pistol when challenged by the ruffians who wanted his horses and money. At last, he found his uncle and returned with him to Valdosta.

It was the time of Carpetbaggers and Scalawags, and the black troops stationed in Valdosta to help the Freedmen's Bureau during Reconstruction swaggered through town, exploring the euphoria of sudden equality that allowed them to refuse to work under new terms or to obey orders that they had to take during the slave years. White women seldom walked the streets of Valdosta unaccompanied by an armed man for fear of being accosted by blacks. The times were hard, with Northerners enjoying the benefits of a "spoils system" that usurped political offices in the South. An article in the *Atlanta Constitution,* quoting an unnamed Virginia newspaper, noted, "A man from Maine has our Post Office; a Vermont man represents us in Congress; a Fellow from Pennsylvania is our Street Commissioner; our Revenue Commissioner is a Massachusetts man; a fellow from Philadelphia is jailer; the Chief of Police is a Pennsylvanian; two

The roads were filled with deserters, road agents, and homeless men desperate enough to kill a young boy for his possessions. But Holliday rode through the days along those roads, coolly showing his pistol when challenged by the ruffians who wanted his horses and money. At last, he found his uncle and returned with him to Valdosta.



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Negroes represent us in the Legislature; and a man from Maine represents us in the Senate."

Still, things were not totally hopeless, as beekeeping became an important industry and those individuals whose land had not been seized for back taxes could plant sea island cotton, sugar cane, and corn for highly-demanded crops. But a major blow was dealt young Holliday on September 16, 1866, when his mother died of consumption, apparently contracted after the war forced a poor diet upon her when they were still living in Griffin.

The loss stunned Holliday. His uncles and relatives tried to keep him from dwelling on his mother's death by taking him hunting down at the Ocean Pond while his aunts cooked whatever delicacies they thought he might want. Relations between young Holliday and his father became deeply strained when Major Holliday remarried a year later. His bride was Rachel Martin, the twenty-three-year-old daughter of a locally prominent neighbor, Stephen Martin.

Young Holliday bitterly resented his father's new marriage, although it helped the Major to become a stalwart figure on the Valdosta social and political scene, eventually being elected mayor several times, having a street named after him, and becoming a charter member of the Valdosta chapter of the Royal Arch Masons No. 107.

By the time young Holliday was eighteen, he had grown to five feet, ten inches tall. His blond hair was carefully combed back from a fine, high forehead, and his lively blue eyes were filled with mischief. He was handsome and educated as a well-rounded gentleman: he could dance the latest dances, recite poetry, play the piano (thanks to lessons from his mother before her death), and had an inheritance—all of which made him a catch for any young girl of marriageable age.

But Holliday had begun to pay serious attention to his first cousin Martha Ann Melanie "Mattie" Holliday, whose father, Robert, had also served as a quartermaster for the Confederacy during the Civil War. Although Mattie was two years older than John, they fell deeply in love. Their romance might have progressed happily had not trouble sent Holliday hurriedly packing for the North.

Although the date is vague, one hot day in summer, Holliday and his Uncle Thomas decided to cool off in the Withlacoochee River. Their favorite swimming hole was along land that Thomas and William were leasing and would purchase three years later. When they arrived, they discovered the swimming hole already occupied by several black men, most of whom were from the Freedmen's Bureau and the troops stationed in Valdosta. Their blue uniforms were scattered on the thick, dusty grass of the river bank.

Holliday was furious and demanded the intruders leave immediately before they were charged with trespassing. They laughed at him, knowing full well the emptiness of his threats since they had their own tribunals and courts in town. Thomas coaxed his nephew to leave, but Holliday suddenly pulled a pistol from under his coat and fired a shot over the swimmers' heads. When one of them ran to his rifle and raised it, Holliday shot him. The others quickly grabbed their clothes and fled.

Holliday was furious and demanded the intruders leave immediately. They laughed at him, knowing full well the emptiness of his threats since they had their own tribunals and courts in town. Thomas coaxed his nephew to leave, but Holliday suddenly pulled a pistol from under his coat and fired a shot over the swimmers' heads.

The Major was furious when his hot-blooded son and Thomas arrived home and reported the shooting. But the Major was a practical Southerner who resented Yankee interference in Southern politics. Something had to be done and done quickly to save his son from the hangman's noose of a stacked court.

It was no time to have a hot-tempered son in Georgia. Rufus Butler had gotten himself elected governor by stationing at the ballot boxes supporters who "helped" illiterate voters mark their ballots. The voters included some who had taken up residence in the towns' local cemeteries. Butler had packed the state legislature with blacks who had been hired to vote as they were told. Tax money, bond issues, and all public funds were going directly into the pockets of the Carpetbaggers and Scalawags, who owned the courts as well.

The days of the Southern gentleman were over and few opportuni-

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ties existed for those who had been reared for the position. Holliday's options were slim. He could continue his education in college, read law, or enter one of the professions. Money was also a problem. On paper, the Major was a wealthy man, but almost all of the South's cash was in the pockets of Carpetbaggers and Scalawags.

Although the Major had friends practicing law in Atlanta and other Georgia towns and cities, he knew he could not place his son with them to read law. Given the Southerners' bitter attitude towards the Freedmen's Bureau and the newly-freed slaves, it would not be long before someone would brag about the Withlacoochee River shooting.

The Major quickly decided to send his son north to dental college. Dentistry, at the time, offered more opportunity than any other field for a relatively small investment. After roughly sixteen months of training, graduates received the title of "doctor," which made a stunning impression in all social circles, despite the profession's but newly-gained respectability.

The best dental schools of the day were in Baltimore—the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery and the Colton Dental Association. But Baltimore was too close to Georgia to allow for young Holliday's safety. The Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery farther north in Philadelphia would be safer. John was quickly packed. After a tearful farewell with Mattie and promises to wait for each other, he traveled north to dental college. Eighteen months would dim the memory of the shooting, and chances were that by the time Holliday returned home, the incident would have lost its immediacy among the countless claims, cases, and lawsuits jamming court dockets. To throw any pursuers off John's track, the Major let it be known around Valdosta that his son had gone to dental college in Baltimore. A hundred years would pass before John's real alma mater was uncovered.

A dentist's education in the early 1870s was not terribly challenging. The Merry Drill—activated by a clock movement whose spring was raised and then released—was being replaced by a foot-pedal-operated pneumatic drill that allowed dentists to make secure anchorings for fillings, crowns, and bridgework. The standard medium for fillings, gold foil, gave the dentist a high return. Dentures were made quickly and cheaply using a new hard rubber, Vulcanite. The average price of fifty cents per extraction included the painsaving use of nitrous oxide gas. A complete set of false teeth generally cost fifteen dollars.

The undemanding class load left Holliday time to explore Philadelphia's nightlife. Although the city fathers held a firm grip upon the type of entertainment offered, "lower Philadelphia" offered plenty of opportunities to watch ladies in pink tights perform "the latest dances of Paris, France" and to play the odd game of chance. Having been brought up a southern gentleman, John knew the right bower

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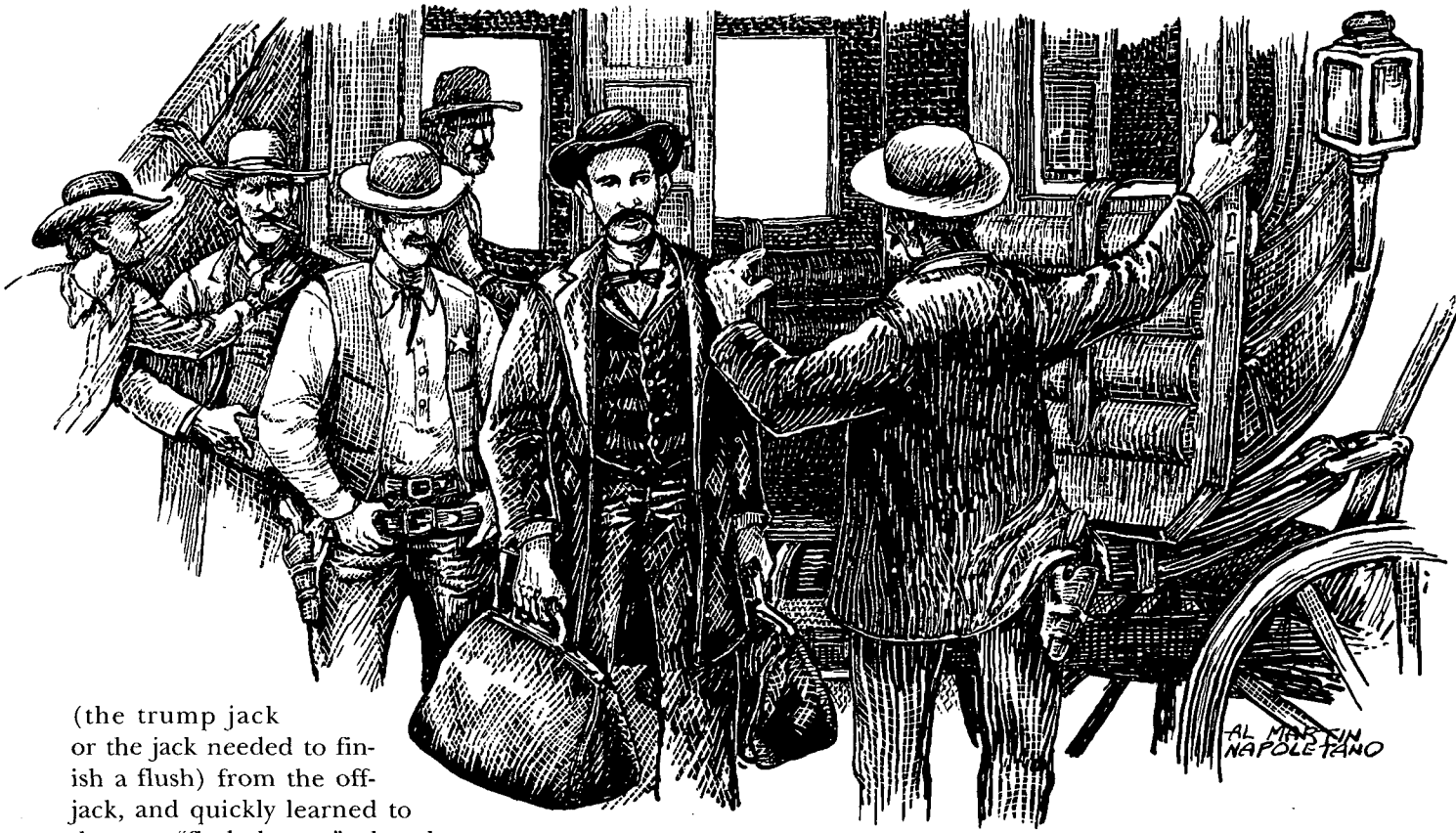

(the trump jack or the jack needed to finish a flush) from the off-jack, and quickly learned to detect a "flash-dancer" when he came across one trying to deal seconds by holding the top card up and slipping the next card to an unwary player.

At the end of the term in 1872, John graduated and headed back to Georgia to set up practice. He was bothered, now, by a strange cough that came upon him at odd times. The cough could be silenced quickly with laudanum or a healthy dose of whiskey. Holliday disliked the narcotizing effect of laudanum so took to sipping whiskey to stop the periodic fits.

Holliday first interned in Griffin, whose population had grown to an estimated 3,000 (white citizens). He shared an office at the town dentist's established practice in the old Merritt building on the southwest corner of West Solomon and State streets. After a few short months, however, he decided that Griffin was too closely tied to Valdosta. He might prudently move to Atlanta, a larger city where he could lose himself and be fairly safe from prosecution for the old shooting incident.

Holliday continued his internship under Dr. Arthur C. Ford, in upstairs offices on the corner of Whitehall Street and Alabama. He and Mattie made plans, but his health suddenly took a turn for the worse. Fever began to fall on him by nightfall, and he frequently awoke in the night, covered with sweat, shivering, and racked by a dry, hacking cough. He tried mineral spring water and Stafford's Olive Tar to ease his cough, but neither helped.

Finally, he went to see a doctor, his Uncle John Stiles Holliday, who gave him the dreaded news that he had tuberculosis, the same disease that had killed his mother. If he stayed in Georgia with its raw winters and steamy summers, he had six months to live. If he moved to the drier climate of Texas, he had a year or two.

Dr. John Henry Holliday's dreams were dashed. He could offer Mattie no more than a life of watching him daily waste away until one night he strangled to death. Holliday arranged for the Major to manage his affairs, including the land he had inherited from his mother in Griffin. Then he headed west for Dallas, Texas, and into legend. It was Christmas, 1872. He was twenty-one years old.

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Mattie Holliday entered the Sisters of Mercy Convent at Savannah in 1883, serving as an elementary-school teacher. She later became sister superior in the Sacred Heart Convent of Augusta, and finally served as sister superior of the Immaculate Conception Convent in Atlanta until her death in 1939. She survived her cousin by fifty-two years.

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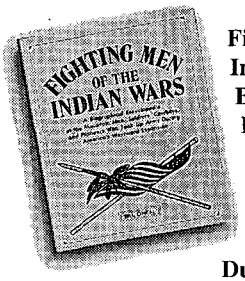

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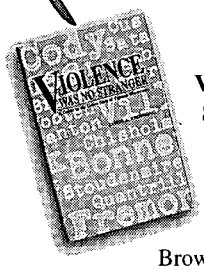

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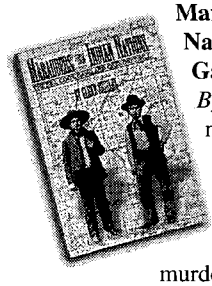

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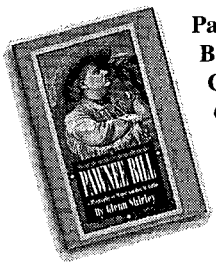

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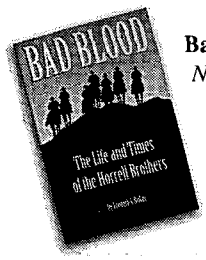

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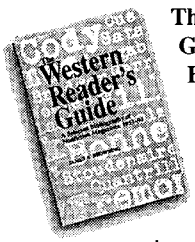

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Omaha's Cowbo

By R.K. DeARMENT

During the 1870s and '80s hundreds of thousands of Texas cattle were driven north to stock the grasslands of Wyoming, Montana, Nebraska, and the Dakotas. Many of the drovers who went up the trail with the herds stayed on to work the new ranches. Some of those who remained did so because they were wanted by the law in Texas. Fearing arrest and extradition, many changed their names.

A few, like Bill McCoy, true name Dan Bogan, and Doc Middleton, the alias of James M. Riley, reverted to their old ways and became notorious outlaws in the new cattle country. Desperado McCoy killed a lawman in Wyoming, was arrested, broke jail, and disappeared. For several years Middleton, at the head of a gang of horse thieves, confounded lawmen, but in 1879 he was captured and sent to prison.

Other fugitives from Texas more successfully reversed the direction of their lives by changing their names. Josiah Horner, sentenced to the penitentiary in Texas for bank and stagecoach robbery, escaped and went to Wyoming where he became Frank M. Canton, stock association detective, deputy United States marshal, and sheriff of Johnson County. Canton would cap a notable career as a peace officer in Wyoming, Oklahoma Territory, and Alaska by accepting appointment as the first adjutant general of the state of Oklahoma.

Another who changed his name, went north, and turned his life around was James Charles Dahlman. Born near Yorktown, DeWitt County, Texas, on December 15, 1856, Dahlman was the fourth of seven children born to Charles and Mary Dahlman, German immigrants. Young Dahlman, who was called "Charley" in Texas, later said that he ran away from his father's farm at the age of fifteen: "I was out in the field plowing....I could see nothing ahead but work and plenty of it and not a great deal in return for it, so I went back to the barn and took a horse and ran away."

Author's Collection

James Charles Dahlman, aged sixteen, shortly after he ran away from home.

A story later circulated that Dahlman left home after shooting his brother-in-law for abusing his sister, but no extant records support that tale. It is known, however, that after taking to the cattle ranges as a teen-aged cowboy, Charley Dahlman ran with a hard crowd and eventually showed up on the wanted lists of the Texas Rangers.

"I got in bad company," Dahlman admitted:

> I was raised with a rope in one hand, spurs on my heels and a six-shooter on my hip. It was a wild country as early as I can remember....During the war and afterwards DeWitt County came to be the rendezvous of about the toughest gang that could be found in the United States. Feuds were common and unrelenting in character between such groups as the Hardins, the Taylors and the Suttons and the Clemmons factions.
>
> I think I am safe in saying that more men died violent deaths in DeWitt county than in any other territory of equal size in the country at any time in the history of Texas.
>
> I have seen as many as seven men killed in one fight between these factions.

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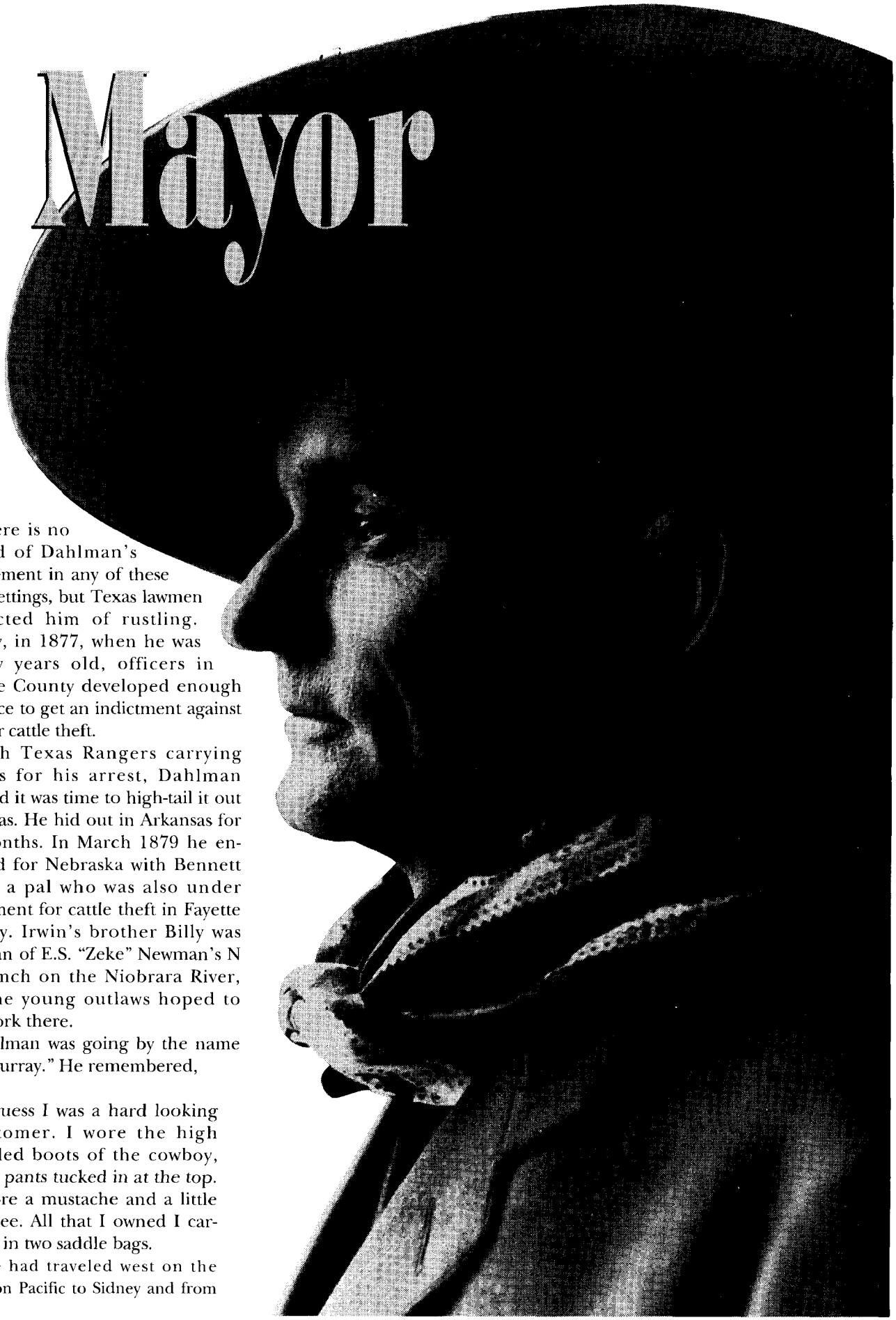
y Mayor



There is no record of Dahlman's involvement in any of these bloodlettings, but Texas lawmen suspected him of rustling. Finally, in 1877, when he was twenty years old, officers in Fayette County developed enough evidence to get an indictment against him for cattle theft.

With Texas Rangers carrying papers for his arrest, Dahlman decided it was time to high-tail it out of Texas. He hid out in Arkansas for six months. In March 1879 he entrained for Nebraska with Bennett Irwin, a pal who was also under indictment for cattle theft in Fayette County. Irwin's brother Billy was foreman of E.S. "Zeke" Newman's N Bar ranch on the Niobrara River, and the young outlaws hoped to find work there.

Dahlman was going by the name "Jim Murray." He remembered,

> I guess I was a hard looking customer. I wore the high heeled boots of the cowboy, with pants tucked in at the top. I wore a mustache and a little goatee. All that I owned I carried in two saddle bags.
>
> We had traveled west on the Union Pacific to Sidney and from

The cowboy mayor of Chadron, Nebraska.

Nebraska State Historical Society

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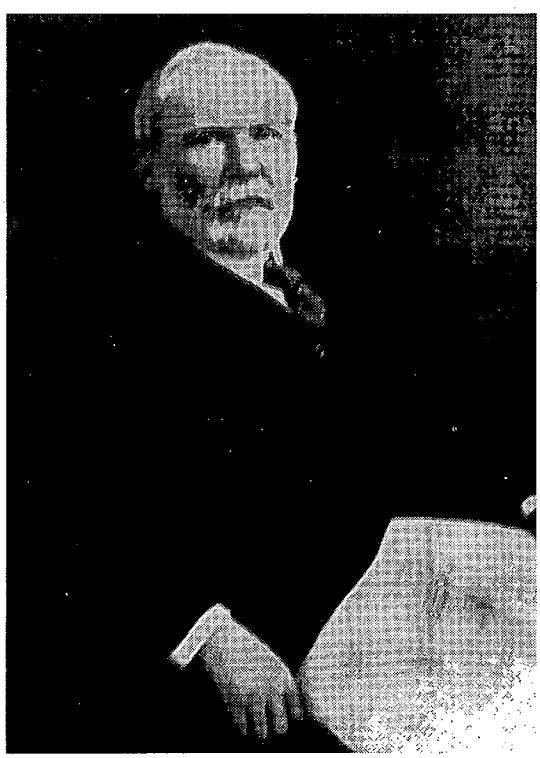
there overland north. I remember the stage was so loaded down that we had to take turns walking. There was six inches of snow and I had never seen snow or ice before. I was not dressed for this kind of traveling but had to make the best of it.

Finally, in a blizzard, it seemed that we were doing most of the walking and I tumbled the whole crowd out at the point of a gun and we rode.

The man calling himself "Jim Murray" was just a little fellow, but he was wiry and tough as rawhide. He packed a gun at all times, and there were rumors that he had used it frequently in Texas. He had the determined look of the gunfighter. Zeke Newman was hesitant to hire him because he "looked too tough." But Murray, who had a way with words and could be very convincing, talked the rancher into keeping him on. For Newman it was a wise decision. The young Texan proved to be a skilled cowboy with ambition and brains, and the rancher soon promoted him to foreman.

In the spring of 1882 Zeke Newman took a contingent of forty N Bar cowhands to Baker City, Oregon, to bring back 20,000 head of cattle to stock ranges he controlled on the Niobrara and the Powder River in Montana. While most of the party rode overland with the horse herds to Oregon, Newman and his secretary, S.W. Russell, went by stage to Sidney, Nebraska, took the Union Pacific as far as Kelton, Utah, and continued on to Baker City by stagecoach. They carried with them a shoe box containing $300,000 in cash to pay for the stock. Accompanying the rancher and his secretary was Jim Murray. Newman had developed a particular fondness for his young foreman and enjoyed his company, but he also thought the dangerous-looking Texan would make a formidable guard for his cash. He disclosed to Murray the contents of the shoe box and asked him to keep a sharp eye on it. Thus the man wanted for theft in Texas was entrusted with a fortune. All arrived safely at the destination.

During the leg of the trip by railroad, the celebrated British writer Oscar Wilde shared a car with the Newman party. Russell convinced Wilde that the steely-eyed Texan with the well-oiled gun was one of the "bad men" of the West and might turn his artillery loose at the least provocation. Wilde avoided Murray throughout the trip, fearful that the bad man might turn bad at any moment.



Author's Collection

E.S. "Zeke" Newman of the N Bar ranch trusted a young Texan calling himself "Jim Murray."

At Baker City, Murray was one of the trail bosses chosen to drive the cattle east. He was in charge of a herd of 2,800 head, a remuda of horses, eight trailhands, a cook, and a wrangler. The drive took six months. Murray started for the Nebraska ranch, but at South Pass a courier informed him of prairie fires to the east which had destroyed pasturage, so he turned the herd north to the N Bar range in Montana. Of the several trail bosses bringing the Newman herd from Oregon, Jim Murray, the youngest, suffered the fewest losses. Newman rewarded him with a pearl-handled six-shooter in a fine holster and belt.

In 1883 Murray bossed another drive, bringing a herd of almost 3,000 head up the trail from Indian Territory to the Standing Rock Agency in North Dakota.

THAT WINTER Murray took a job as bookkeeper for George F. Blanchard, post trader at the Pine Ridge Indian Agency in Nebraska. At about the same time Harriet Abbott, a native of Winterport, Maine, and a Wellesley college student, arrived at the agency to tutor Blanchard's children. The eastern college girl and the Texas cowboy soon became romantically involved, and in December 1884 they were married at Union, Iowa, in the home of Harriet's sister.

In the spring of 1884 Murray had accepted appointment as stock inspector and range detective for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, with headquarters at Valentine, Nebraska. Valentine, county seat of Cherry County, was then the terminus of the Northwestern Railroad. Like other western end-of-track towns, it attracted a rough element of saloonmen, gamblers, honky-tonk girls, and gunmen who threatened to take complete control of the place.

To counter the unwholesome purveyors of vice, Jim Murray and Cherry County Sheriff W.H. Carter decided to establish a social club in Valentine where young men could assemble and enjoy the company of respectable ladies. Attendance at the club would be by invitation only, and the roughs and harlots of the sporting crowd were not welcome. As opening night approached, some of the tough element sent a warning that they were coming, with or without invitation. Murray and Carter went ahead with their plans.

The evening's festivities began peacefully enough, but suddenly a bunch of hoodlums smashed through the doorway and began

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Dahlman swings a rope in New York harbor as a group of rabid Nebraska supporters of William Jennings Bryan greet their leader's return from a round-the-world trip in 1906.

shooting out the lights. The room emptied quickly as men and women exited by every available window and door.

When the shooting stopped and a lamp was lit, Murray was standing on a chair, six-gun in hand. Sheriff Carter stood beside him, also with revolver leveled. Murray ordered the party-crashers to get out or he would begin shooting, and it would not be at lights. For a tense moment the two sides glared at each other. Then the thugs, remembering the stories of Murray's vaunted ability with a pistol and his reputed willingness to use it, holstered their weapons and shuffled back into the night. The invited guests returned and the party resumed. Murray and Carter had no further trouble with intruders at their social club.

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For two years Murray made his home in Valentine and worked for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. But the old problems back in Texas haunted him and he was uncomfortable living under an assumed name. The story went around later that Thomas Sturgis, secretary of the WSGA, at Murray's request, checked with the Texas authorities to see if Charles Dahlman was still wanted for murder. The reply came back that the man Dahlman shot had not died, "although he needed killing."

Actually, the indictment against Dahlman—for theft of cattle—was dismissed in November 1882. Only a judgment in the amount of $500 for breaking bond remained open. He evidently paid that amount in 1885, clearing all legal entanglements in Texas. Jim Murray once again assumed the name of Dahlman. In Nebraska he was known as "Jim," and it was as "Jim Dahlman" he would be known the remainder of his life.

In early 1886 he and his wife moved to Chadron, seat of newly organized Dawes County in northwestern Nebraska.

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There, in partnership with Hank Simmons, Dahlman established a small ranch, the Half Circle-X, and also opened a meat market. He quickly became involved in local politics and served on the city council. In November, 1886 he ran for sheriff on the Democratic ticket and was elected.

In later years when old-timers spun the tales of Sheriff Dahlman's time as sheriff of Dawes County, they did not remember him as a gunman; the stories invariably revolved around his cleverness in avoiding gunplay and violence. His arrest of a wanted outlaw with the bad man's own six-shooter was an example. When Dahlman learned that the hardcase had shown up in Chadron and was then in the post office, he walked directly to that building. Wearing no badge or weapon, he entered the building and quickly spotted his man. A pistol was prominently displayed at the desperado's waist. Dahlman walked right up to him, jerked the revolver from the holster, jammed the muzzle in the ribs of the surprised bad man, and informed him he was under arrest.

As the citizens' rage built, Dahlman recognized the beginnings of a lynch mob. It was afternoon; he did not expect any action against his prisoner until after dark. Knowing that the young men of Dawes County loved baseball, Dahlman sent several of his deputies to start up a game at a field on the edge of town. Soon the groups of muttering men had disappeared from the street corners; everyone was at the game.

On another occasion Sheriff Dahlman foiled a probable lynching. Apparently motivated by nothing but pure meanness, a drifter had pushed a woman named Mrs. Warren Shistler into a well. Only through fortuitous circumstance was she rescued by several cowboys who happened by. The cowboys tracked the stranger, caught him, and turned him over to the sheriff.

Some members of the "Cowboy Brigade" that attended the Roosevelt inaugural in 1905. Seth Bullock is the tall man, center, front row

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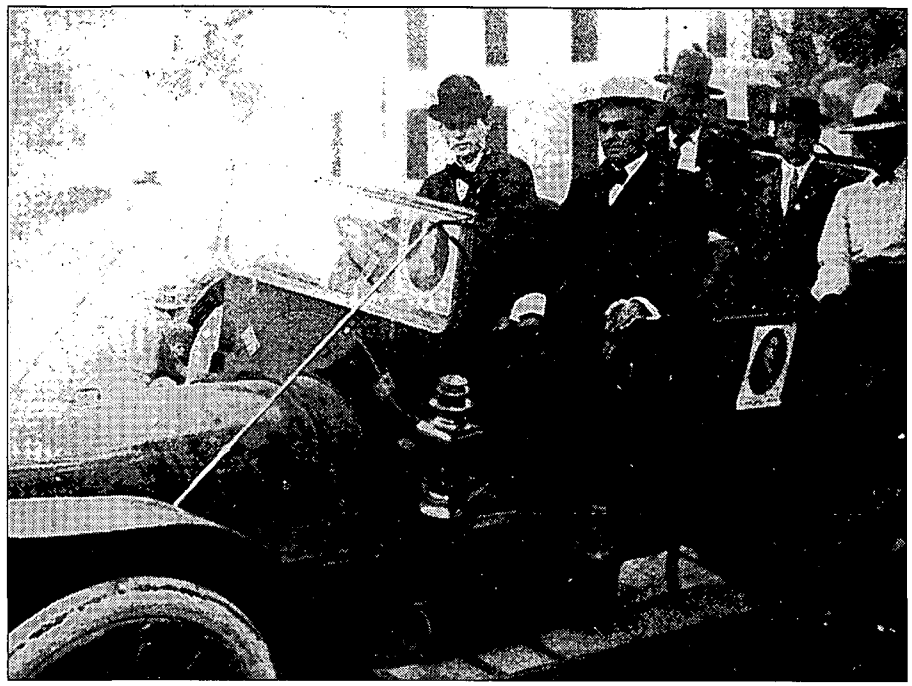
When news of the vicious attack spread through the countryside, riders converged on the town and knots of men formed its streets. As the citizens' rage built, Dahlman recognized the beginnings of a lynch mob. It was afternoon; he did not expect any action against his prisoner until after dark. Knowing that the young men of Dawes County loved baseball, Dahlman sent several of his deputies to start up a game at a field on the edge of town. Soon the groups of muttering men had disappeared from the street corners; everyone was at the game. Dahlman then spirited his prisoner out of town and took him by wagon to Rush, in neighboring Sheridan County. The man was taken on to Lincoln where he was eventually tried, convicted, and sent to prison. And there was no lynching in Chadron.



Author's Collection

Dahlman in his 1908 Franklin automobile during his campaign for governor of Nebraska in 1910. The supporter at the left in the rear seat is Doc Middleton, who thirty years before had been the premier horse thief of the northern plains.

Author's Collection

Tom Mix is third from right, front row.

In the aftermath of the famous cattle war in nearby Johnson County, Wyoming, Chadron was the scene of intense excitement when Bill Walker and Ben Jones showed up. Walker and Jones accidentally witnessed the killing of two suspected rustlers by the cattle baron invaders, and both sides in the conflict were seeking them. Agents of the big ranchers were intent on spiriting them out of the state so they would be unavailable at a forthcoming murder trial. Wyoming officers sympathetic to the nesters' cause were equally determined to return them to testify against the invaders.

Forces from both sides converged on Chadron, where Walker and Jones, under arrest on warrants carried by the Wyoming officers, were given a habeas corpus hearing on May 9, 1892. Pandemonium broke loose in the packed courtroom when the two were released. Guns were pulled, and for several terrible moments it seemed the Johnson County War would break out again in Nebraska. Sheriff Dahlman and his deputies worked mightily to prevent additional bloodshed. Finally Walker and Jones were hustled onto a special train headed for Omaha and points east. They never testified in the Wyoming murder trials, and the Johnson County invaders went free.

Dahlman was a lover of good horses, especially distance runners. A 100-mile horse race at Chadron offered prizes of $1,000, $500, and $250 for first, second, and third place finishes, drawing some of the finest distance horses in the West. The racers were to traverse a five-mile course twenty times. Dahlman's entry was a bronco called "Baldy" that he used to chase wild horses. He instructed his rider, Frank Hartzell, to gallop the first fifteen miles and then to pull out and rest Baldy for an hour. The owners of the other ten horses kept up the fast early pace and then, thinking Dahlman's horse had dropped out, continued on. When Dahlman's horse returned to the track, it breezed by its jaded competitors who, one by one, fell out of the race. Three of the horses died. Baldy covered the one hundred miles in ten hours and a half and galloped the last half mile. He was the only entry to finish the race, and Dahlman collected all three prizes.

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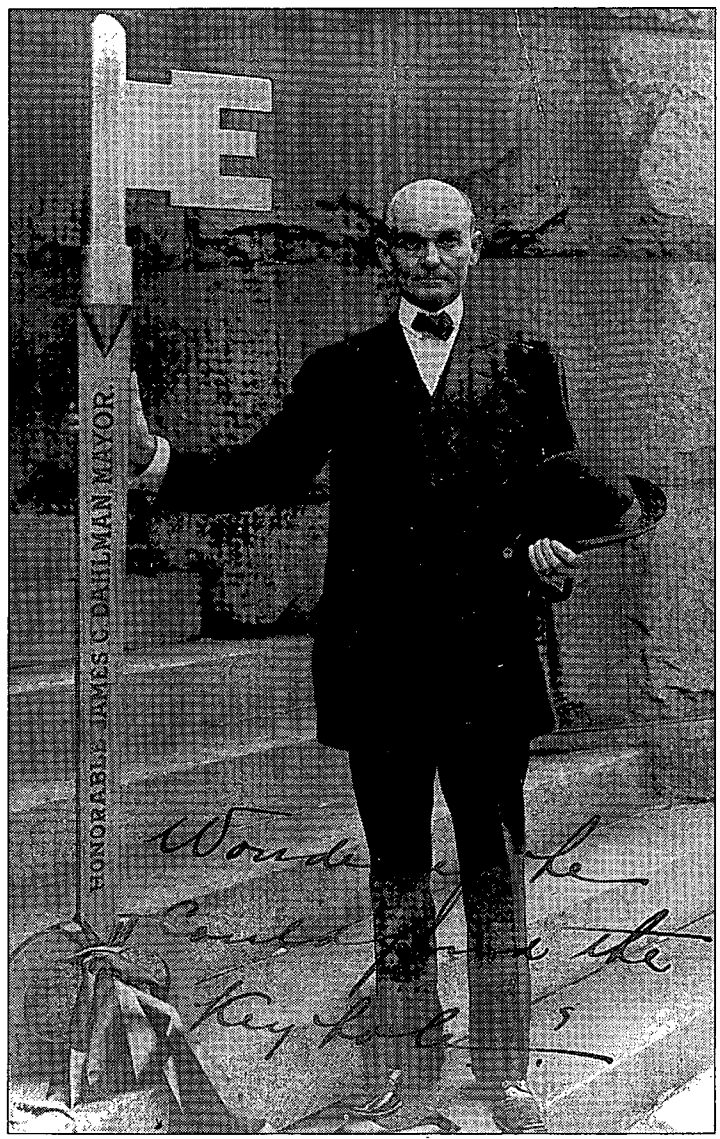
In 1893 Dahlman was one of the promoters of the great thousand-mile race from Chadron to Chicago which received national press coverage. By then he had been elected mayor of Chadron, and he saw the race as a way of bringing nationwide attention to the little Nebraska cow-town. In March 1893 he and his partners formed a committee to establish rules and select a route. Entrants were to use not more than two horses (one ridden and the other led) of western breeding; saddles must be of western cowboy style weighing at least thirty-five pounds; rider and saddle must weigh at least 150 pounds. The entry fee was twenty-five dollars and the winner was to receive $1,000. The race was to start at 8:00 a.m. on June 13, 1893, from the Blaine Hotel in Chadron and riders were to check in at selected points in Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois before finishing at Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West tent beside the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. Cody and others added money and merchandise to the prize pool.

BY MAY more than twenty individuals had announced they would enter, including two Sioux Indians and a woman, but only nine white men showed up for the start of the race on June 13. One of the entrants was Doc Middleton, the one-time horse-stealing gang chieftain, who had settled in Chadron after serving his prison term and was now considered reformed. John Berry arrived at Buffalo Bill's tent first, just a few hours short of two weeks after leaving Chadron, and Cody announced him the winner. The Chadron officials, however, disqualified Berry on the grounds that he had advance knowledge of the route and had ridden blooded rather than western horses. The officials recognized Joe Gillespie as winner. Eventually all the prize monies were distributed among the eight riders who finished the race.

As Dawes County sheriff and mayor of Chadron, Dahlman became increasingly involved in politics. As a Southerner and Texan, he had been reared a Democrat, and throughout his life he would remain a staunch champion of that political party. He was a delegate from Nebraska to the 1892 Democratic national convention and attended every subsequent national convention to the end of his life. He served as chairman of the state Democratic Committee from 1896 to 1900 and on the party's national committee from 1900 to 1903. He first met William Jennings Bryan in 1888 and was a strong supporter of Bryan in his three unsuccessful campaigns for the presidency of the United States.



Nebraska State Historical Society

Mayor Dahlman with the key to the city of Omaha.

When Silas A. Holcomb, running as a Populist, but backed by Dahlman and many other influential Democrats, won the Nebraska governor's office in 1894, he rewarded Dahlman with appointments to state offices, first as an oil inspector and later as a member of the Nebraska board of transportation. Dahlman moved to the capital city of Lincoln and became even more involved in the political scene.

BY 1898 Dahlman was engaged in the livestock commission business at Omaha. He and his wife purchased an unpretentious home at the corner of Twenty-ninth and Hickory streets where they lived for the next three decades.

Dahlman's diehard dedication to the Democratic party did not prevent him from participating in the cowboy parade at Republican Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural ceremonies in March 1905. Roosevelt had ranched and hunted in the Dakotas during the 1880s and was a great admirer of Westerners in general and cowboys in particular. Seth Bullock, celebrated early lawman of Montana and South Dakota, loyal Republican, and good friend of Roosevelt, proposed that an assembly of cowboys should go to Washington and ride as

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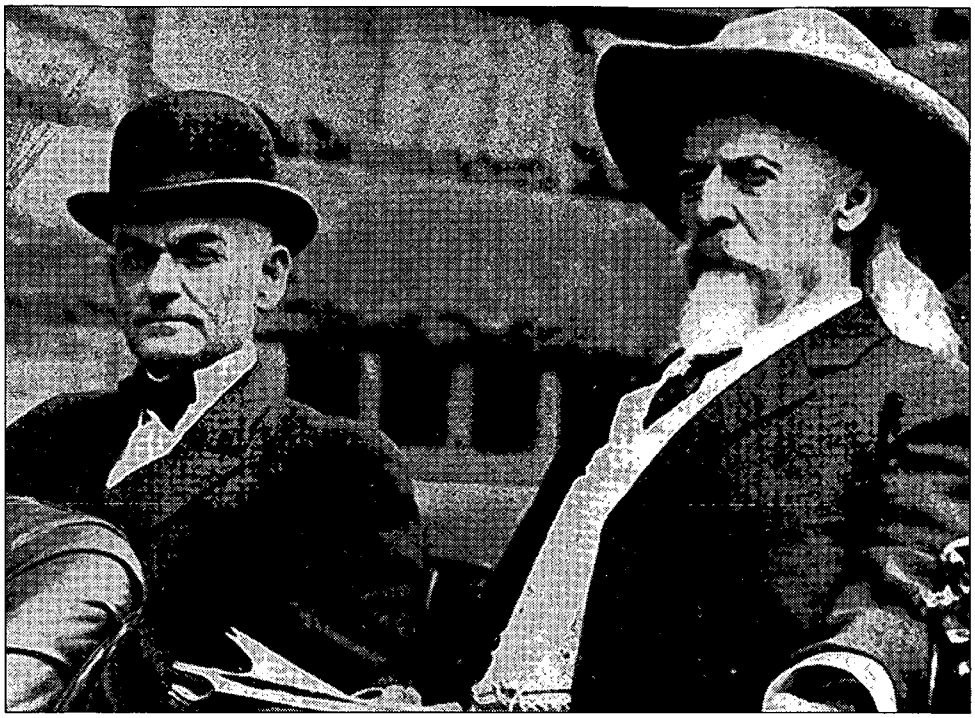
a group in the inaugural parade to honor the president they claimed as one of their own.

SOME FIFTY Westerners responded to the call. Most were from South Dakota, but representatives from Wyoming, Montana, and Nebraska also went. Many were working cowhands; all had spent considerable time on the range and were expert cattlemen. They brought their own horses and wore traditional cowboy garb—big hats, neckerchiefs, chaps, high-heeled boots—and six-shooters prominently displayed. In addition to Bullock, the group included Tom Mix, later to be the top cowboy star of motion pictures, Howard Eaton, a prominent Montana rancher, and Jim Dahlman.



Author's Collection

Mayor Dahlman and William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody.

The delegation that newspapers called the "Cowboy Brigade" started at Edgemont, South Dakota, where a Pullman coach for the men and two freight cars for their horses began the trip to Washington. Dahlman joined the entourage at Omaha. Responding to the extensive news coverage, crowds gathered at depots all along the route to see the swashbuckling riders of the range. At a few of the stops some of the cowboys, after indulging in a little too much liquid refreshment, hauled out their shooting irons and punched holes in the sky, scattering the onlookers.

In the inaugural parade members of the Cowboy Brigade twirled lariats and waved Stetsons but judiciously refrained from firing their six-shooters. Roosevelt beamed in the presidential box and sent word for the cowboys to remain at the conclusion of the parade so that he could greet them individually. Later the President appeared at the north portico of the White House. The cowboys entered the grounds through the west gate. Winchesters in saddle scabbards and holstered six-shooters hanging from cartridge studded belts, they rode their horses in turn up to the President and shook his hand. Roosevelt enjoyed the scene immensely, but his security people must have been appalled.

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Back in Omaha the following year, Jim Dahlman ran for mayor. He defeated his opponent by three thousand votes and began the first of seven three-year terms of office. In 1910 he was the Democratic candidate for governor of Nebraska. William Jennings Bryan, the party leader and perennial presidential aspirant for whom Dahlman had worked so diligently, broke with him over one issue and supported his Republican opponent. Dahlman lost.

He served as mayor of Omaha until 1918 when he was narrowly defeated by a reform candidate. During his three years out of office Dahlman held positions as inspector of the state secret service and the police section of the railway administration. In 1920 he was appointed United States marshal for the state of Nebraska.

He ran for mayor again in 1921 and was elected. He was reelected twice more and at the age of seventy-three was preparing his campaign for an eighth term in office when he died suddenly on January 21, 1930. Newspapers proclaimed him the best known mayor in the United States. It was not a bad record for a man who came to Nebraska under an assumed name, as a fugitive from Texas justice.

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THE JUG

OF THE

By RAND

Buffalo were central to the development of the American West. Indian tribes created whole cultures around them. White men built an industry around destroying them, and their near extinction led to the subjugation of the Indians. Misinformation surrounds the animal, however, and closer examination helps dispel the many myths, misunderstandings, and legends about the buffalo.

Perhaps ten to fifteen million buffalo remained on the Plains in the mid-nineteenth century. Estimates as high as sixty million in the seventeenth century are possible but somewhat unlikely. Still the beasts were so numerous that inexperienced people would flee at the sight of a migrating herd, which appeared as a spreading black stain on the horizon as it moved north in the spring. Individual animals became lost in the mass as the herd became one dynamic juggernaut of rumbling hooves, dust, stench, and power.

Herds of four million animals, covering areas fifty by twenty miles, were not uncommon. Migration routes extended to as high as 400 miles in a season, the herd working north in the spring and looping south in the fall. The great Texas herd was the largest. It wintered near the Concho

Author's Photo

Buffalo today, although domesticated, are as dangerous and unpredictable as their ancestors a century ago.

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ERNAUT PLAINS

D. SMITH

and Pecos rivers and moved north in spring through the Texas Panhandle to the Arkansas River and into Colorado. Comanches, Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Kiowas claimed the right to hunt the buffalo as they passed through their territories, and they fought other nations to preserve that right. For all practical purposes, the herd was obliterated by 1876.

The numbers overwhelmed early hunters, who would shoot the beasts until their rifle barrels became too hot to touch. The shooters would drop hundreds of buffalo only to watch hundreds more replace them. Most men could shoot enough of the animals in four hours to keep a skinning crew busy the rest of the day, and they would do it day after grinding day during the herd's northern migration.

The great herds left many trails in the earth, much as traders cut ruts on the Santa Fe Trail, but to find them you must know where and what to look for. Buffalo's herding instincts forced them to migrate. In some areas they had regular routes, while in others they wandered at will. The migrations were not extensive enough for the bison to escape the rigors of winter; instead they were "shifts" from a summer range to a winter range determined by the availability of food in a particular season. In traveling from one place to another buffalo always sought the easiest grades and routes around obstacles, and the trails they left formed the basis for most of our modern highways and railroads.

But the buffalo created those broad depressions only when they migrated en masse. Usually the animals separated into herds of fifty to one hundred individuals for grazing. The buffalo trails mentioned in many contemporary writings occurred when the animals made short journeys to water or lounging areas as small units within a larger herd. On agricultural land, most trails have been plowed under. On grazing land, cattle use exactly the same trails that grazing bison did, because modern cattle also seek easy grades and go around obstacles. Buffalo pastures such as those managed by the state of Kansas south of Garden City or at Big Basin between Ashland and Meade, Kansas, look exactly like cattle pastures throughout the plains. After all, bison are little different from domestic cattle in their grazing and lounging habits.

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Ancient buffalo traces are visible at Scott Lake Park north of Scott City, Kansas. The park contains a large natural spring that has been present for thousands of years. Because of arid conditions, the springs attracted wildlife and the Indians who harvested them. Thousands of small trails cover the area, and visitors can still find fossilized buffalo bones along cliff sides and in shallow canyons, especially after rains wash away part of the topsoil.

To get relief from clouds of insects, bison frequently wallowed in the dirt. Those wallows are often still visible, frequently in the softer soils of south central and southwest Kansas. Buffalo loosened the earth with their hooves, lay down, and kicked the dirt over their bodies. Once the sod had been stripped off, succeeding bison used the wallows until they formed large, saucer-like depressions. Some wallows were fifty feet across and two feet deep. The dust filtering down through the bison's hair choked the insects and reduced their activity. Sometimes rain filled the wallows or the bison urinated in them; when they rolled in the mud their bodies became plastered, providing excellent protection. Because modern cattle do not use them extensively, most of the wallows have grassed over.

A large bull bison may stand six feet at the shoulder and measure eleven and one-half feet long. Many weigh almost a ton and some have

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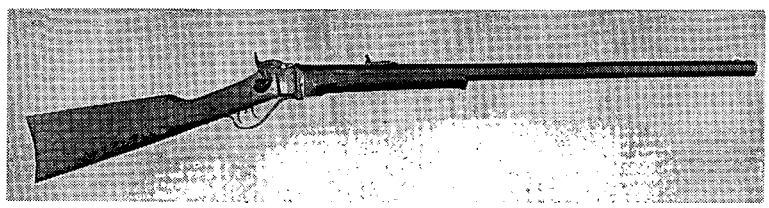
weighed nearly 3,000 pounds. Cows are smaller and slimmer, weighing 800 to 900 pounds. Color varies little among bison; shadings are from dark brown to black. In spring the winter hair, which is subsequently shed, may bleach to a dark tan. Albinism is infrequent, and Indians proclaimed such animals sacred. A fellow named Prairie Dog Dave Morrow shot one in the early 1870s and received $1,000 for the hide. Some white-faced bison were also recorded.

Long hair covering the head, neck, shoulders, and forelegs accentuates the bison's humped back. In winter the hair can grow to eight inches long. The unusual physical feature allows buffalo to face into harsh winter winds rather than turn from them.



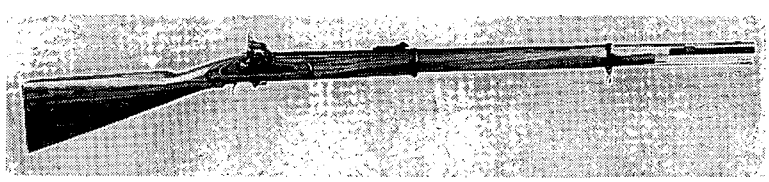
Author's Photo

Hunters considered the Sharps dropping block single-shot the finest buffalo rifle a man could own.

One of the quickest ways to make money on the frontier was to hunt buffalo. In 1870 bull hides brought two dollars each; cow and calf hides $1.75. Mop hair, the long hair that fell over the bison's eyes and horns, was worth seventy-five cents a pound. Hunters cut out buffalo tongues and put them in brine barrels on their wagons. By and large, though, the hunters left the rest of the animal to rot on the prairie.

The federal government encouraged the wholesale slaughter of the bison herds. It even gave hunters free ammunition in the form of a subsidy and awarded medals to the most successful hunters. The reasons were simple. First, Indians depended upon the herds for survival; with the buffalo gone, Indians would have to surrender to reservations just to get enough food to eat. Second, large scale agriculture was not possible until the dangerous and unpredictable buffalo were removed from the plains and replaced by domestic cattle. Railroads needed immigrants to pay construction and operating expenses, and immigration for farming was not possible until the buffalo were gone. The government equated the extinction of the buffalo with the settlement of the land.

Some hunters killed buffalo Indian fashion—riding a swift pony after the herd and shooting the animals as they passed. Buffalo Bill Cody hunted that way when supplying railroad crews with meat. The method was effective, but dangerous. Indians hunted buffalo from horseback with arrows and spears. Mexican ciboleros used long lances and short-barreled muskets to hunt buffalo in a similar fashion, but they did not kill many because tanning was slow and cumbersome. For that reason William and Charles Bent of Bent's Fort, Colorado, traded with Indians for buffalo hides. Indian women brain tanned the hides and worked them with their teeth; few whites were willing to do such work. In the 1860s an efficient method of chemically tanning hides was developed in Germany; it changed the nature of the hunt. After that, companies in New York and England contracted with businessmen in Kansas for large numbers of buffalo hides. Hunters no longer had to look for markets after killing the animals; rather, they began hunting to fulfill contracts.



Author's Photo

Many hunters used Civil War surplus .58 caliber Enfields. The big rifles were inexpensive and deadly at long range.

Professional hunters chose another method of hunting. They called it "buffalo running," confusing terminology since it evokes images of a chase on horseback. Actually, a hunter positioned himself in an ambuscade with high-powered rifles and shot the animals as they passed in migration. Later, when the number of buffalo had dwindled, hunters called the same tactic the buffalo "stand." Hunters would shoot small groups at long range until they were either all down or had fled beyond the shooters' range.

Buffalo did not associate the report of a rifle with the death of a companion. Such thinking involves complex associations of which most animals are not capable. If a hunter did not shoot so often that the report of his rifle became alarming or did not wound an animal and cause a violent reaction to the shot, the other buffalo would just mill about in confusion. A well-placed shot in the lungs simply caused the animal to lie down and suffocate from its wound. When other animals approached it, the hunter could drop them next so the odor of blood did not upset them. Good shooters occasionally downed more than a hundred animals before the herd became scared and moved away.

Hunters learned to shoot dominant cows first, calves second, and bulls last. Dominant cows were leaders of the group, and other animals usually reacted as they did. If a hunter could kill a dominant cow first, the rest of the herd would be less skittish as the shooting continued. Also, by shooting the cows first,

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calves second, and bulls last, the hunter was taking the animals in the order of profit potential. Bull hides were much heavier and difficult to cure. A crew could work two or three cows during the time it took to handle one large bull. Because a hunter was not sure how long he could work his stand before the animals moved off, he had to kill the most profitable animals first. Most of the isolated buffalos killed in the 1880s, after the height of the buffalo trade, were old bulls whom hunters had ignored.

PROFESSIONALS USED large, .50 caliber, single-shot rifles that often weighed over eleven and sometimes as much as sixteen pounds. The weight helped reduce recoil and allowed for steady sighting, especially when the hunter used crossed sticks to support the barrel. Sharps dropping blocks and Remington rolling blocks were the most popular, but almost any large caliber rifle would work. Hunters used muzzle loading plains rifles, Spencer repeaters, Civil War surplus Springfield .58 caliber muzzle loading rifles, and trap door Springfields. Bill Cody used a converted breech loading Springfield called a needle gun for most of his early hunting. Contrary to popular depiction, hunters considered Winchesters almost worthless before 1873 for buffalo hunting because of their light loads.

Hunters usually killed buffalo in late fall, winter, and early spring when the hides were well-haired, but during the height of buffalo hunting from 1868 to 1874, hunters kept up the slaughter all year. In 1870, two major buying firms gathered over 200,000 hides between them. A good hunter could gross as much as $200 a day during the high-market years, a fantastic wage for the time.

The hunters paid a price, however. They lived in primitive conditions, dwelling on the open plains for months at a time, constantly exposed to the filth of skinning and hide processing, and open to Indian reprisals and the whims of nature. More than a few froze to death or simply disappeared in the vast wilderness. That was especially true when buffalo hunting drew thousands of amateurs as if they were going to a gold rush. Most who tried their hand at buffalo hunting were ill prepared and did not know how to survive in the harsh environment.

Nevertheless, the influx of hunters glutted the market in 1873, and the prices for green hides fell drastically. Men who had gone into debt to assemble an outfit found themselves shooting hundreds of buffalo for prices that did not cover their costs. Many of the true professionals abandoned the business before they lost everything. Some did not realize what was happening and rode their business into bankruptcy, while others became desperate and turned to crime to pay their bills. Buffalo hunting became associated with "hard cases."

Author's Photo

Buffalo hunters hand loaded ammunition to conserve money, and kept the rounds in cartridge belts.

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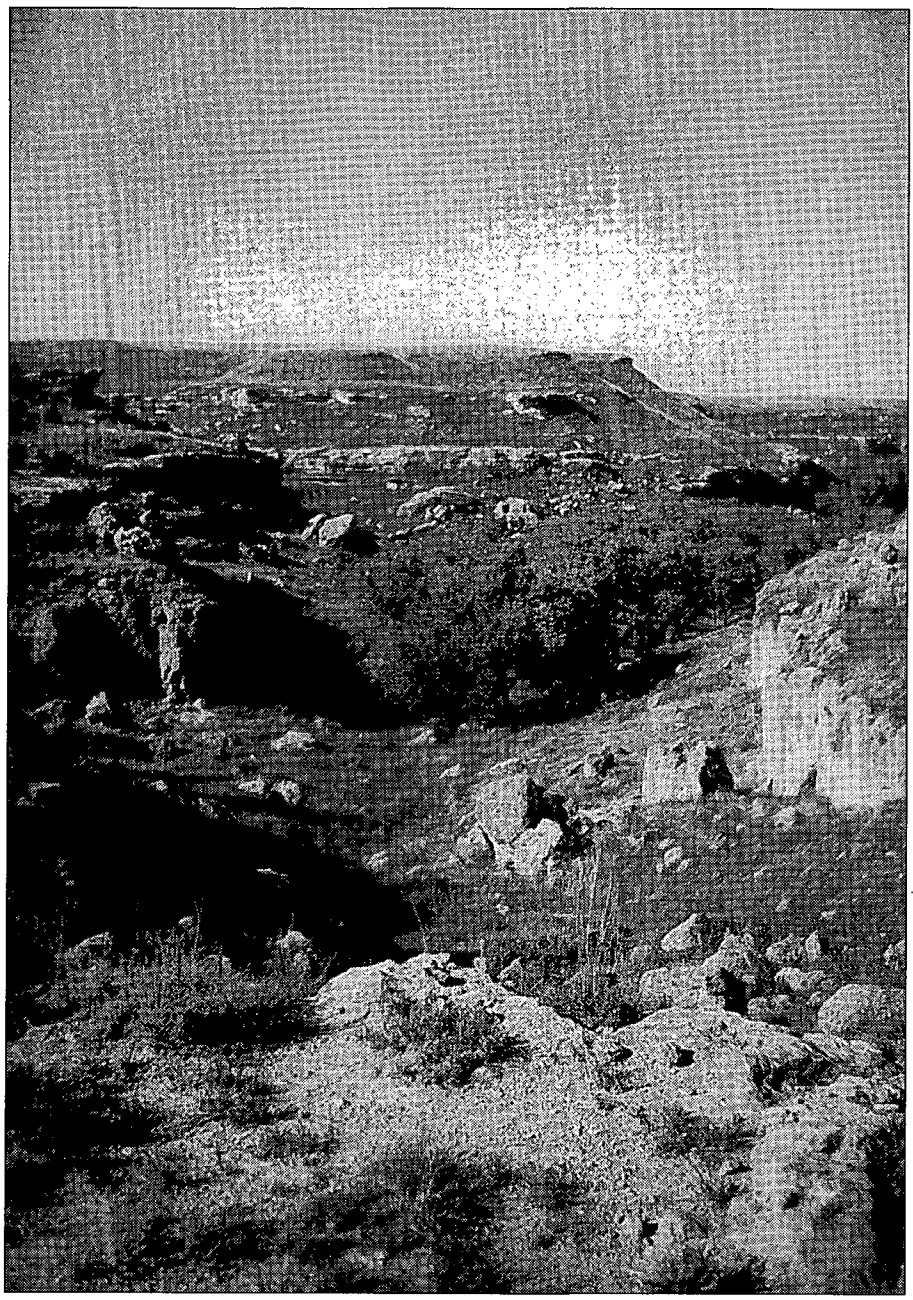
A typical buffalo hunting outfit consisted of two shooters, four skinners and two men to stretch hides. They would take two iron-wheeled wagons to carry supplies and haul in the hides. Wagons would carry a ton of ammunition—1,600 pounds of lead and 400 pounds of powder. Hunters reloaded ammunition to conserve resources, using brass casings several times before discarding them.

Normally crews went where they expected to find animals and built a dugout in the side of a hill for a base camp. If the herd moved, so did the crew. The hunters would haul hides into a settlement periodically to sell and buy supplies.

A hunter would leave base camp around 6:00 A.M. and try to establish a stand by 10:00 A.M. He would take rifles and at least a hundred rounds of ammunition. He would also carry a wiping rod, ripping knife, hunting knife, and sometimes a butcher's steel for sharpening. By mid-morning the bison had grazed heavily and were normally lounging. The hunter would shoot, if possible, until around 2:00 P.M., when the skinners would arrive and begin processing the animals.

Skinning crews used mules and single trees to "roll" the hide off the animals. They would split the hide down the belly and cut holes on one side. Then they would back the mules up to the beasts and fasten the single trees to the hide. The mule would pull the hide from the animal as the skinner trimmed it from the meat. Sometimes the skinner would drive an iron stake through the animal's head to secure it to the ground so the mules could pull tough hides free



Author's Photo

Ancient bison "traces" and fossils are still visible at Scott Lake State Park north of Scott City, Kansas.

THE HIDE stretchers usually staked out the hides where the animal fell. They placed them hair down, salted them, and often sprinkled on powdered arsenic to keep vermin and varmints from eating them. In good weather, hides dried in three days. When the hides were dried, the stretchers folded and stacked them. When the stacks were about eight feet tall, the men tied them into bundles and "boosted" them onto the wagons for sale.

A good man could skin fifty buffalo a day. The shooter, who was generally the boss of the outfit, normally paid him fifty dollars per month, but sometimes twenty-five to thirty cents per hide. The work went on day after day, as long as buffalo were available. A few men kept expenses low by doing all the shooting, skinning, and stretching themselves. Outfits were frequently on the plains for six months at a time, making only occasional trips into a town for supplies. After a while, the men began to smell like their work; most folks knew a buffalo hunter by his bouquet if not his gritty appearance.

Other than beans, flour, and coffee, the hunter's principle food was the buffalo itself. Buffalo humps, highly esteemed for their flavor, were hung in trees for months, becoming crusty and green. The men would slice and salt them, then fry them in tallow. Usually buffalo

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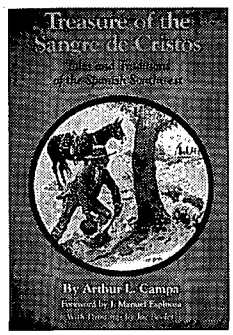
BOOKMART



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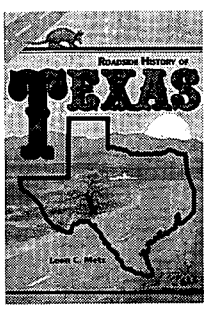

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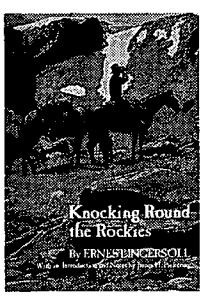

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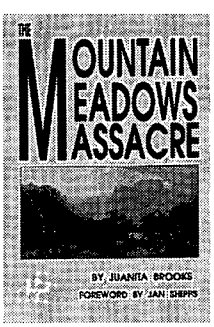

466—THE MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE. *By Juanita Brooks.* This book remains the definitive study of the attack on an emigrant wagon train in southern Utah by Indians and Mormons. One of the worst atrocities in the history of the westward movement, the incident has generated controversy since its occurence in 1857. "Completely objective"—*Journal of the West.* University of Oklahoma Press.

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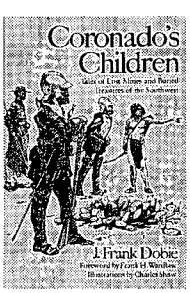

439—CORONADO'S CHILDREN: TALES OF LOST MINES AND BURIED TREASURES OF THE SOUTHWEST, *By J. Frank Dobie.* Written in 1930, *Coronado's Children* was one of Dobie's first books and helped him gain national prominence as a folklorist. In it, he recounts tales and legends of the hardy souls who searched for buried treasure in the Southwest. This is tale-spinning Dobie at his best. University of Texas Press.

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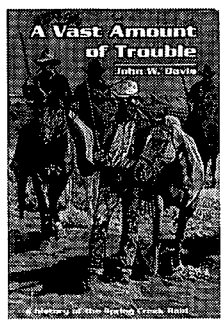

519—A VAST AMOUNT OF TROUBLE: A HISTORY OF THE SPRING CREEK RAID. *By John W. Davis.* Davis' book is the first comprehensive study of the most important incident between sheepmen and cattlemen in Wyoming history. Although sheep raids had occurred for years, where men were killed and thousands of sheep slaughtered, no cowboy had ever been convicted of a crime associated with a sheep raid. *A Vast Amount of Trouble* is a gripping account of the famous raid in early 1909 and the ensuing trial. University Press of Colorado.

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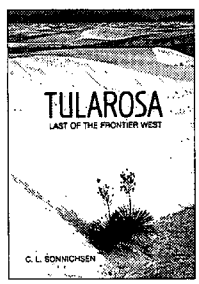

484—TULAROSA: LAST OF THE FRONTIER WEST. *By C.L. Sonnichsen.* The story of Tularosa—sunscorched, sandblasted, merciless—is as harsh and tough as its environment. Writing from primary records and interviews, Sonnichsen tells the stories of the great cattle ranchers pitted against daring rustlers, white men against Apaches, desperadoes against lawmen. "Accurate, crisply written."—*New York Times.* University of New Mexico Press.

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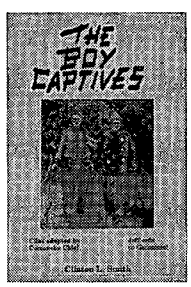

465—THE BOY CAPTIVES: BEING THE TRUE STORY OF THE EXPERIENCES AND HARDSHIPS OF CLINTON L. SMITH AND JEFF D. SMITH. *By Clinton L. Smith and J. Marvin Hunter.* Originally published in 1927 by Hunter, publisher of *Frontier Times*, this account records the story of two young men who claim to be the only known brothers to survive Indian captivity. Captives of Comanches and Apaches, the Smiths offer a look at Indian life and customs. Copies of the original book are rare. Anchor Publishing Company.

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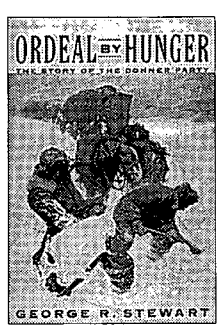
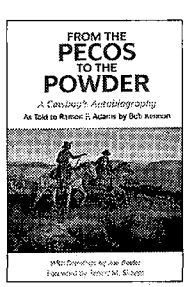


327—ORDEAL BY HUNGER: THE STORY OF THE DONNER PARTY. *By George R. Stewart.* Since its first publication in 1936, *Ordeal by Hunger* has been the definitive history of the ill-fated Donner Party of emigrant pioneers. Stewart reconstructs the events that befell the Donner caravan. Houghton Mifflin. **Paper, $10.95**



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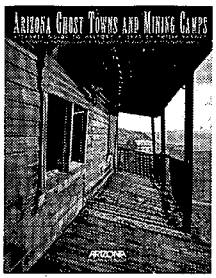

529—ARIZONA GHOST TOWNS AND MINING CAMPS: A TRAVEL GUIDE TO HISTORY. *By Philip Varney.* A publication of *Arizona Highways* magazine, this is a visually rich book that also serves as a useful travel guide to an excellent assortment of Arizona ghost towns. Included with top-notch color photography are many historical photographs and regional road maps. Route instructions are included, as well as a glossary of mining terms. Arizona Highways.
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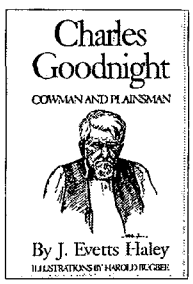

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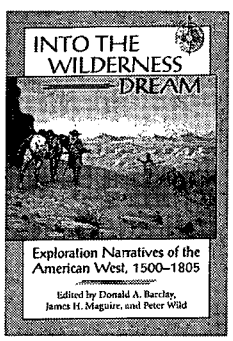

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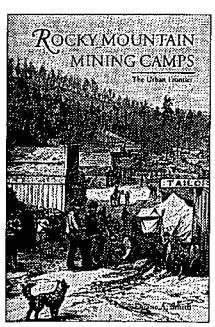

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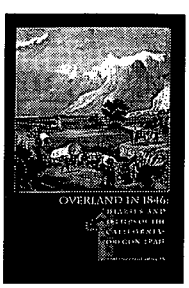

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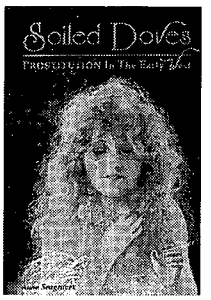

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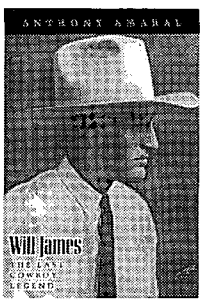

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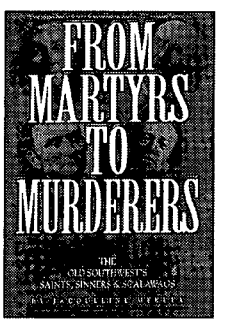

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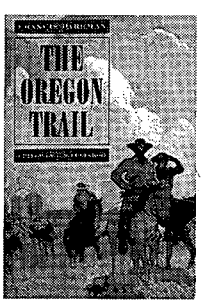

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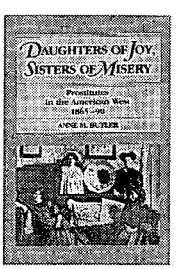

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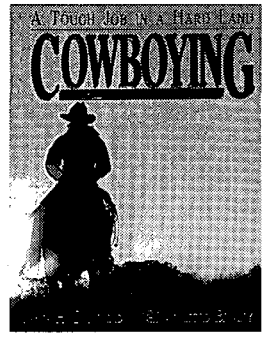

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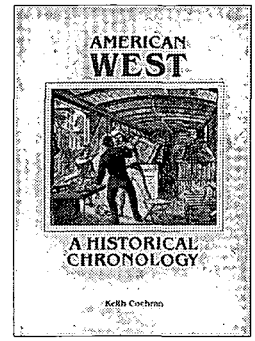

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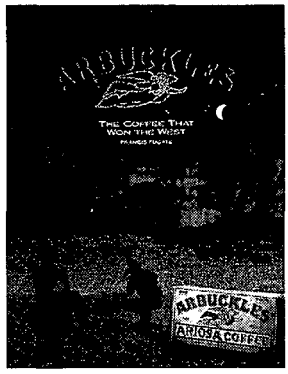

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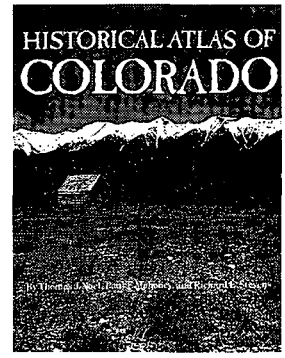

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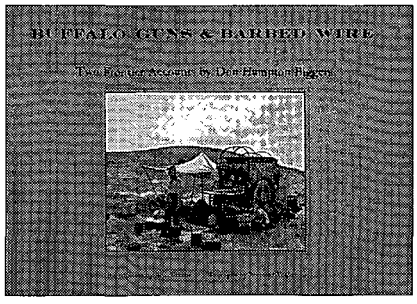

526—BUFFALO GUNS AND BARBED WIRE: TWO FRONTIER ACCOUNTS. *By Don Hampton Biggers.* Intro. by A.C. Greene; biography by Seymour V. Connor. This attractive book features two collections of Texas tales which were originally published by frontier journalist Biggers in classic volumes of Texana—now rare and coveted. *Pictures of the Past* (1902), one of the accounts, weaves buffalo hunters' stories into hardbitten tales of the herds, the hunters, and the hunting grounds. *History That Will Never Be Repeated* (1901) records lore of the early Texas cattle industry. Texas Tech University Press.

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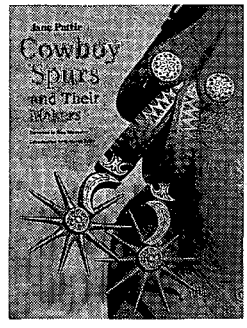

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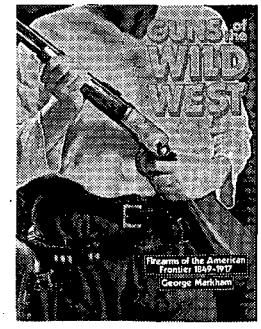

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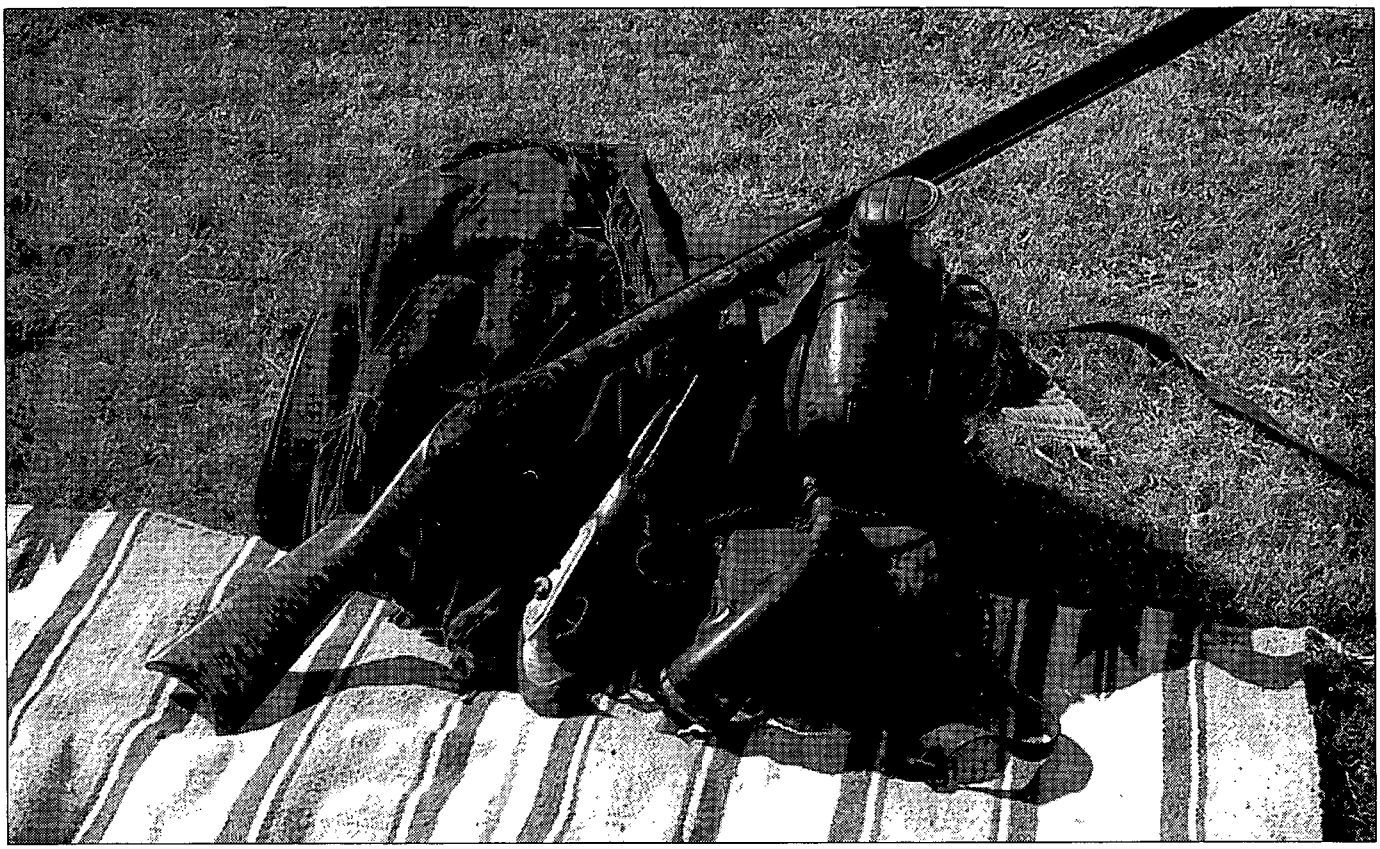

Author's Photo

Hunters used muzzleloaders long after the advent of cartridge rifles because of their power and dependability.

meat would be hung over the winter. Men often prepared it by digging large square holes lined with fresh green hides pegged to the edges. They salted the meat and left it in the hole for eight days, then smoked, resalted, and cured it. The hunters ate enormous quantities of the meat at each meal.

Until 1873 hunters stayed north of the Arkansas River. By treaty, the area south of the river was Indian land; the river was the "dead line." The tremendous harvest of 1873 so decimated the herd, however, that it did not move north of the river. If men wanted buffalo, they would have to cross the line.

Newly formed Dodge City, Kansas, was the center of the buffalo trade, and hunters sent Wright Mooar and Steele Frazier to ask Major Richard Irving Dodge, commander of nearby Fort Dodge, about the government's position on hunters crossing the river. According to Mooar, Dodge said, "Boys, if I were a buffalo hunter, I would hunt where the buffalos are." Washington's unofficial policy of obliterating the buffalo overrode any Indian treaty.

In October 1873, Dodge City founder and robe trader Charlie Myers organized a trek into the forbidden zone. To support and encourage the hunters he proposed to buy the hides from a point on the plains and transport them to Dodge City at his own expense. The logical location was Adobe Walls in present-day Hutchinson County, Texas, a failed trading post of William Bent's marked with the adobe ruins of the post.

Fifty men, one woman, and thirty wagons made the trip to Adobe Walls, where the group erected two sod houses, a corral, and a saloon. A late spring delayed the coming of the herd, but when it did appear, the hunters broke into small parties and began their annual slaughter.

Desperate to save the buffalo, an alliance of Comanches, Kiowas, Arapahos, Cheyennes, and Plains Apaches attacked Adobe Walls early June 27, 1874. The hunters, using the big buffalo guns, held off the Indians, however, and before the year was over the army had severely punished the Indians for the attack. From then on the land south of the dead line was fair game.

The hunting industry steadily declined in the south range as the buffalo neared extinction. The last group of buffalo in the Southwest was slaughtered in 1887, long after the big money had gone from the trade.

Hunters in 1868 believed they would "hunt buffalo for the rest of their lives." By 1878, local newspapers were complaining about unemployed hunters "looking for trouble and a grubstake." A few men made small fortunes, some barely eked out a living. Finally, people gathered the buffalo bones littering the plains to use for fertilizer. After that the buffalo were gone, the Indians subdued, and the hunters left with only a memory of the American buffalo trade.

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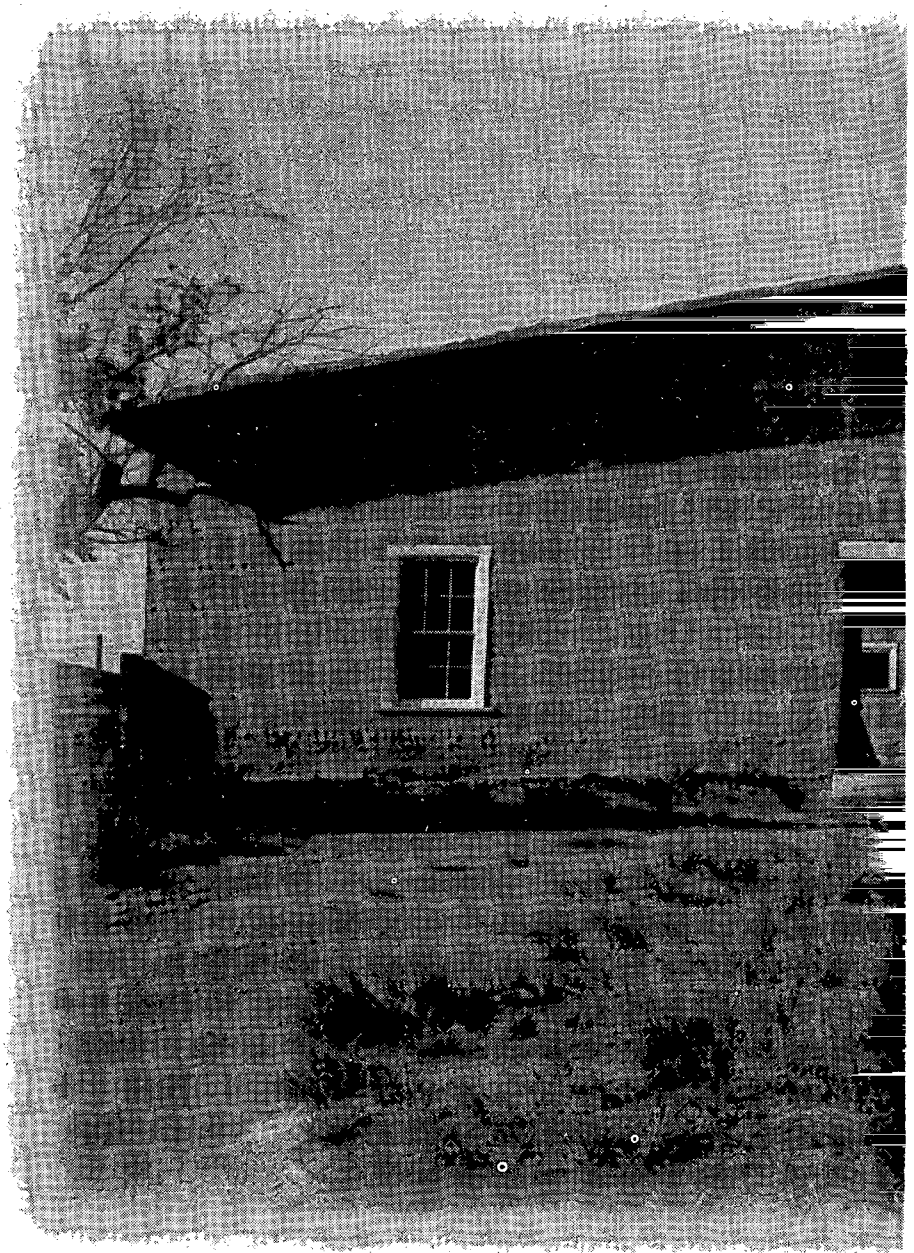
WALTER VA

EMPIRE

By CHARLE



The front of the Empire Ranch's original four-room ranch house.

Walter Lennox Vail was a tenderfoot when he arrived in Arizona in 1875. He was twenty-four years old and had spent the last four months in Virginia City, Nevada, working as a timekeeper in the Comstock mines. Even though he had no money and his experience with cattle was limited to milking the cow on his family's farm in New Jersey, Vail wanted to buy a ranch.

Vail had assets, though: a rich uncle, Nathan Vail, in Los Angeles, and a rich partner named McCarthy, a friend of Nathan. He also had plenty of confidence in himself.

In November 1875 Walter Vail and McCarthy went to Tucson to look for suitable property. Apache atrocities so frightened McCarthy, however, that he refused to leave town. On his own Vail found a ranch fifty-three miles southeast of Tucson in the Cienega Valley. Land speculators Edward N. Fish and Simon Silverberg owned it, and they wanted to sell.

The Vail-McCarthy partnership ended before it really began, so Vail returned to Virginia City to earn enough money as a carpenter to pay for the ranch. When he realized he could not earn the money quickly, he joined forces with another friend of Nathan, a rich Englishman named Herbert Hislop.

In Los Angeles the new partners boarded a stagecoach for Tucson on July 5, 1876. During the uncomfortable eight-day journey Vail and Hislop became good friends, and by August 22 they were owners of the 160-acre Empire Ranch and its 612 head of cattle. They paid Fish and Silverberg $1,174 for the property; Vail's uncle Nathan loaned him the

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LAND THE RANCH

. PARK

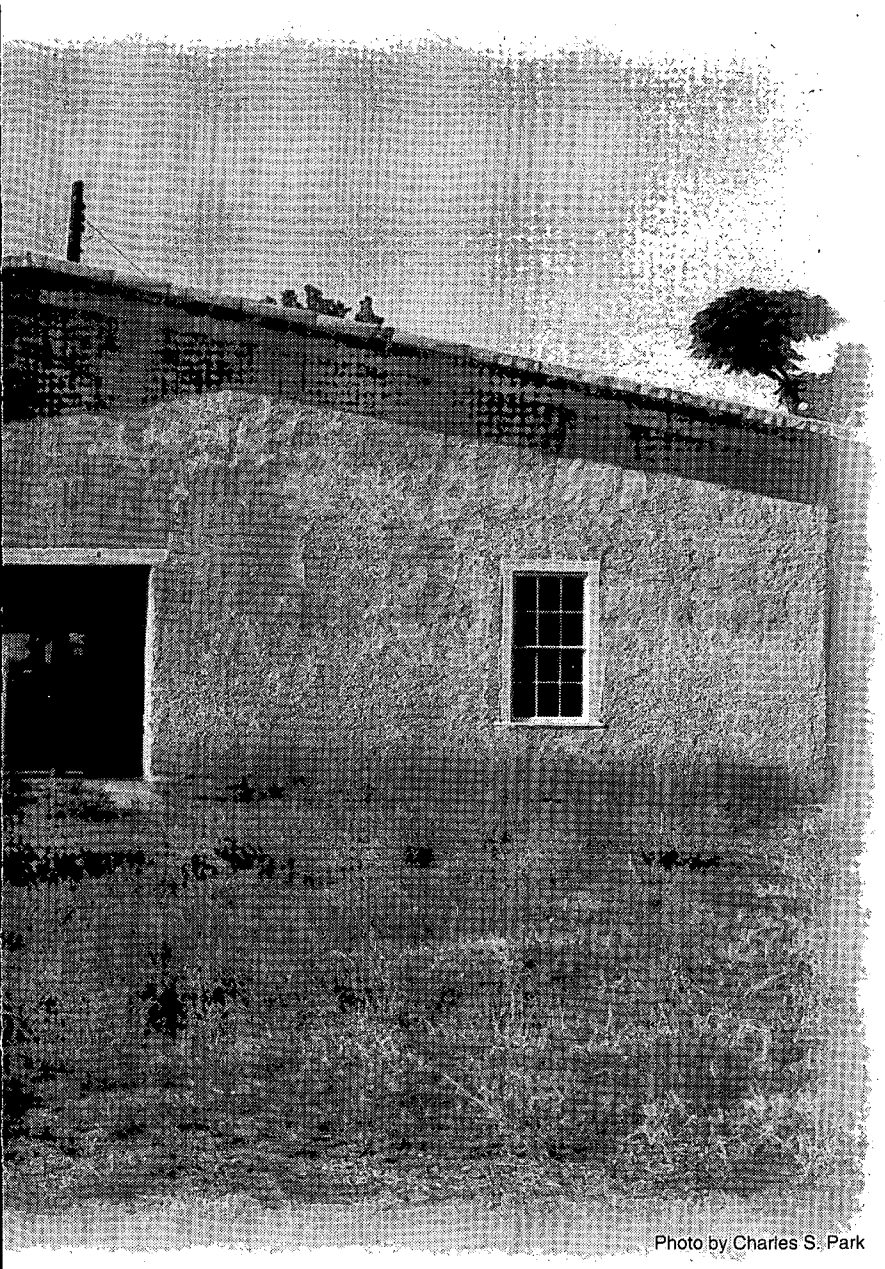

Photo by Charles S. Park

$587 for his half of the investment.

The Cienega Valley was a grassland of rolling hills surrounded by the Santa Rita and Empire Mountains on the west, the Canelo Hills and Huachuca Mountains on the south, the Whetstone Mountains on the east, and the Rincon Mountains on the north. Cienega Creek drained the valley and its watersheds from Sonoita north to the Pantano Wash, which turned northwest around the Rincons and flowed into the Santa Cruz River.

The ranch was on Empire Gulch, on the eastern slope of the Santa Ritas, on a spring-fed creek shaded by huge cottonwood trees. Its meadows were lush with sacaton and salt grass.

A thick-walled, four-room adobe house served as a ranch house. For four months Vail and Hislop worked to improve the house, which had no windows, doors, or furnishings. They did most of the work themselves because Tucson carpenters were too expensive. A breezeway twenty feet wide separated the four rooms—two on each side—and provided the only access to a one-hundred-square-foot corral.

Apaches frequently stole horses in the area, and Vail and Hislop carefully protected theirs. They grazed the horses by day in a fenced pasture 200 yards from the house, and at night they drove them into the corral. The Indians raided all around the Empire, killed three ranchers and stole many horses, but left the Empire alone.

The partners knew they needed a bigger ranch if they were to be successful, and they quickly took over adjoining ranges. By controlling the stream flowing through the Empire they commanded the use of 1,500

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acres of rangeland surrounding their 160-acre tract.

In September 1876 a sick neighbor wanted to sell his 160 acres, and Vail and Hislop bought the land and the 620 sheep on it. Vail did not like sheep, but the Empire needed the water and range.

The partners hoped to build a herd of 5,000 cattle, but such expansion would require capital. They got it when John Harvey, another Englishman and former business partner of Vail's Uncle Nathan, joined the partnership. In January 1877 Vail rode to John Chisum's ranch near St. David, Arizona, on the San Pedro River, bought 793 head of Durhams and Herefords, and unloaded his sheep in the deal. Before he could move his new herd, however, Apaches stole all the Chisum horses. Vail was lucky; he lost none of his newly purchased cattle and only one of his horses.

That spring Vail rode to Chisum's Long Rail Ranch on the Pecos River in New Mexico and bought forty Durham bulls to upgrade the Empire's stock. Before he could start the drive back to the Empire, Vail injured his knee badly when a horse unseated him. He spent the next five months recuperating and could not drive the cattle to the Cienega Valley until the next autumn.

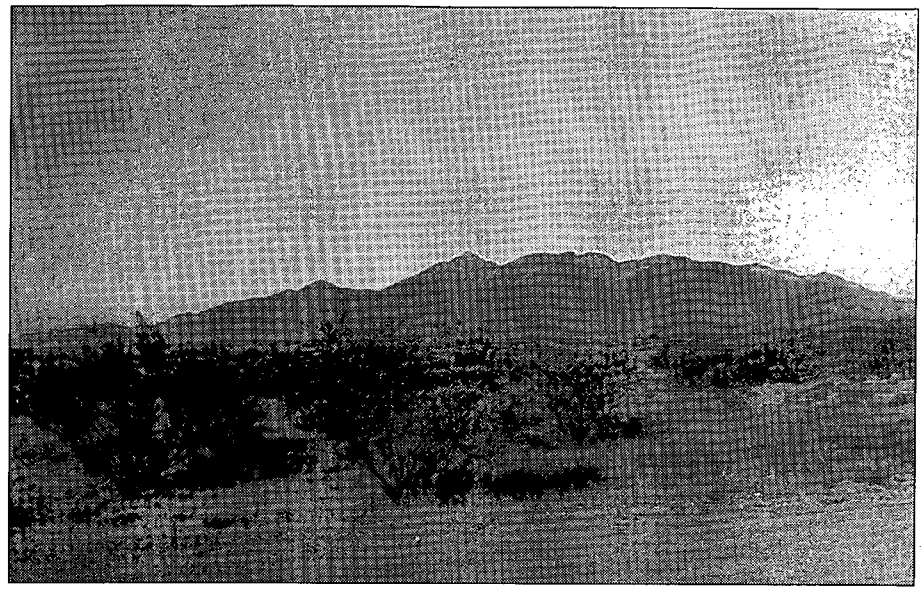

Photo by Charles S. Park

The Santa Rita Mountains bordering the Empire Ranch's western ranges.

While Vail was gone, Hislop got into an argument with a sheepman who drove his flock across Empire land to water. Before a range war started, however, Vail rode in with the bulls. He quickly convinced the sheepherder to keep his animals off Empire range.

By then Hislop, the refined Englishman, had found life on the range distasteful. The hours were long, the work was hard, and as yet the partners had seen no financial returns, for Vail refused to sell any stock to get back their investment. Vail borrowed $6,850 from Uncle Nathan's wife, Anna, and bought Hislop out in March 1878.

With the Empire's routine established, Vail won election to Arizona's tenth territorial legislature. At twenty-seven years old, he was the youngest delegate to that body. Although he served for only a year, he worked hard to advance the concerns of cattlemen, such as the repeal and replacement of a Pima County fencing ordinance.

When the Empire's herd became large enough to sell some of the stock, Vail began looking for markets. He found eager buyers around Tombstone who would absorb all the beef the Empire could supply, regardless of quality. That meant Vail could sell them inferior beef from Mexico. Sales were so good that he was able to pay off Aunt Anna and

Photo by Charles S. Park

Cottonwood trees line Empire Creek near the ranch house.

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continue expanding the ranch.

In May 1879 Vail's brother Edward arrived to take Hislop's place. By the end of the year the partners had more than 2,200 head of cattle. In three years they had built the original 160-acres into a ranch deserving of the title "Empire." And they were not finished.

Photo by Charles S. Park

The east side of the original adobe house.

THAT SAME year Vail and Harvey became partners with John Dillon, an Empire cowboy with prospecting experience who had struck silver on the eastern slope of the Empire Mountains. Their Total Wreck Mine would be successful, eventually producing $500,000 worth of silver, but in 1880 a group of people challenged Vail, Harvey, and Dillon's ownership of the mine. The Empire men won the lawsuit, with Nathan Vail's help, but the legal expenses were so high Dillon could not meet his share. He dropped out of the partnership.

In 1881 Vail married Margaret Newhall, a New Jersey girl, who came to the ranch with $10,000 and bought out John Harvey. Vail improved the house for her, adding two bedrooms, a living room with bay window, a dining room, bathrooms, and a covered porch. The house also had three stone fireplaces. Vail wanted it to be the showplace of southern Arizona.

Concentrating on building his range as well as his herd, Vail filed for grazing rights on all the springs and seeps in and around the Cienega Valley, paying a dollar each in filing fees. In 1882 he picked up 3,500 acres when he bought the Happy Valley Ranch on the eastern slope of the Rincons. He doubled the acreage of the Empire by buying out Don Sanford's Meadow Valley Ranch, which gave Vail control over twenty-eight square miles between the Whetstones and the Empire Mountains. He also bought Tom Gardner's 160-acre Apache Springs Ranch, which controlled abundant water, and extended his holdings southward.

By 1883 a town of 300 people had grown around the Total Wreck Mine. It boasted fifty homes, three hotels, a brewery, and four saloons. The Vails sold beef to the butcher shop, operated a bank, a lumber yard, and a large bunkhouse, and they built a toll road to the Southern Pacific tracks at Pantano Station. By the time the bottom dropped out of the silver market in 1884, the Vails had extracted $500,000 from the Total Wreck. When the property later sold for $630 in delinquent taxes, Walter Vail bought it!

Vail and Harvey became partners with John Dillon, an Empire cowboy with prospecting experience who had struck silver on the eastern slope of the Empire Mountains. Their Total Wreck Mine would be successful, eventually producing $500,000 worth of silver, but in 1880 a group of people challenged Vail, Harvey, and Dillon's ownership of the mine.

With 10,000 head of cattle crowding his ranges, Vail bought more land to spread out his stock. He acquired ranges east of the Whetstones and farther south in Cienega Valley. He expanded his range onto the 2,700-acre Pantano Ranch, which extended the Empire twenty-one miles from Gardner Canyon to the Rincons.

Wanting to diversify, Vail began breeding racehorses in 1884. Although profitable, racing remained a sideline for Vail. He also won election to the Pima County board of supervisors where he continued to work on behalf of the cattle industry.

By 1885, the local market for beef had become saturated. Vail shipped a trainload of 1,200-pound steers to San Francisco and got top money for them. Other ranchers were shipping to California, and Vail warned that they would saturate the market there if they weren't careful. Vail's prediction came true.

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The Arizona ranchers tried to reach the wide-open eastern market, but Southern Pacific railroad charges cut deeply into their profits. If the railroad would give him special rates, Vail said he would build slaughterhouses and his own cars, then pack his beef in ice and ship it east. Railroad officials were enthusiastic about the idea but would not make any concessions. Vail abandoned the idea in disgust.

In 1887 he bought the Mary Kane Ranch and got control of the remaining pasture land between Empire Gulch and Fort Crittenden. Still, he needed more land to support his 23,000 head of cattle. His deals with other established ranchers such as Rollin Richardson, Oscar Ashburn, and Colin Cameron, gave him more room to the south. Then he brought 2,000 steers from the Chisum property on the San Pedro and two herds of shorthorns from John Slaughter's San Bernardino Ranch, and once more his ranges were overcrowded.

Vail's dislike for the Southern Pacific Railroad was deep. When it raised shipping rates to California, he took a gamble. He had 917 head ready for shipment to the Warner Ranch, but decided to drive them there in defiance of the railroad. He put his brother, Edward, and his foreman, Tom Turner, in charge of the drive.

Vail sought grassland in southern California. In 1888, with a real estate agent named Carroll Gates, he leased the 26,700-acre Warner Ranch in San Diego County and shipped his surplus cattle there.

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They left on January 29, 1890, following the railroad and using water holes that Southern Pacific workers had left when laying the tracks ten years before. The drive reached the Colorado River on March 15. The crew went into Yuma for rest and recreation while the cattle grazed and rested; then they crossed the river and started the long hard haul across the desert.

Tom and Edward hired two brothers, Frank and Bill Cox, who

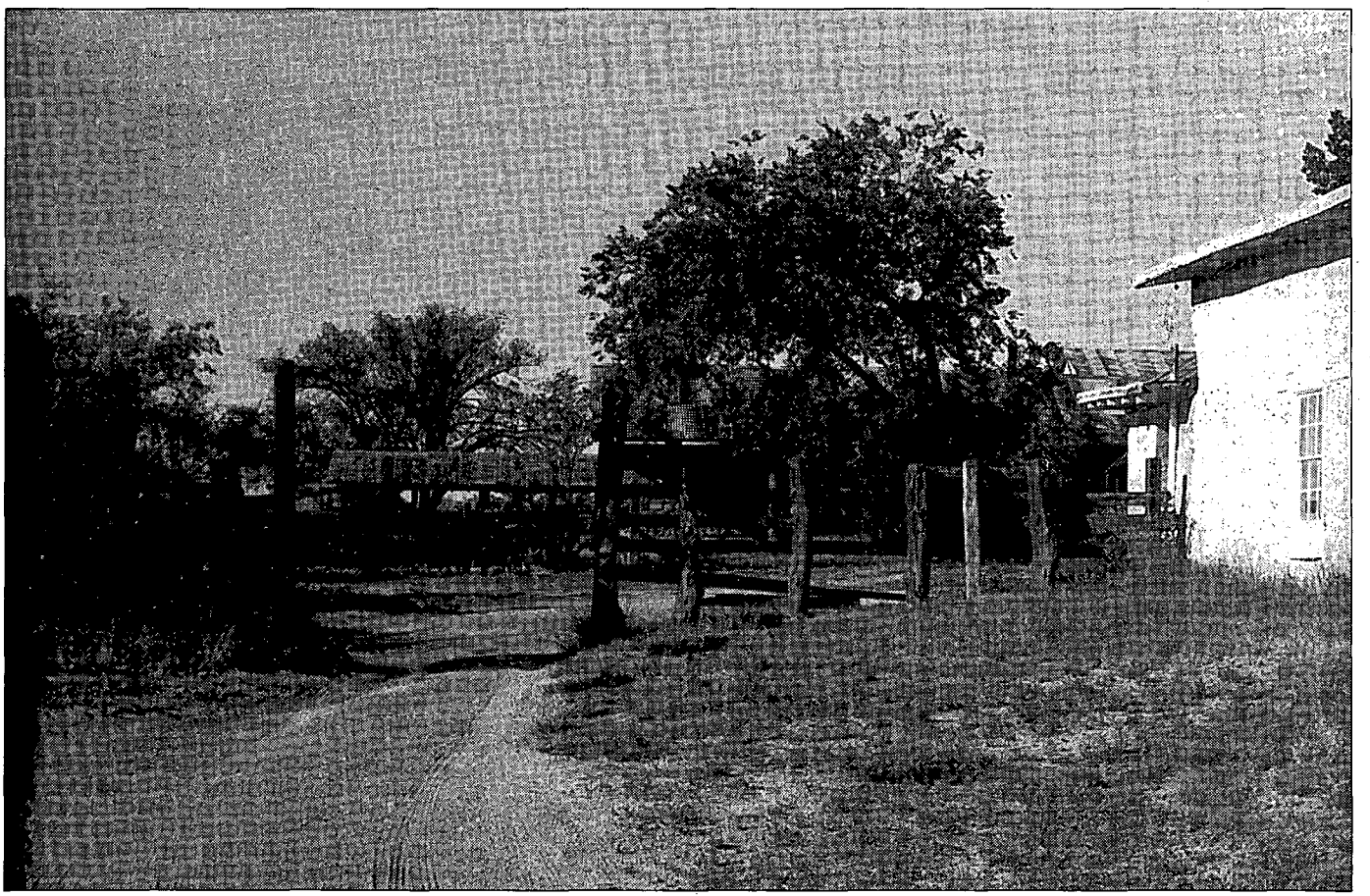

Photo by Charles S. Park

The horse corral next to the Empire's ranch house. Vail and his partners carefully protected their horses from Apaches.

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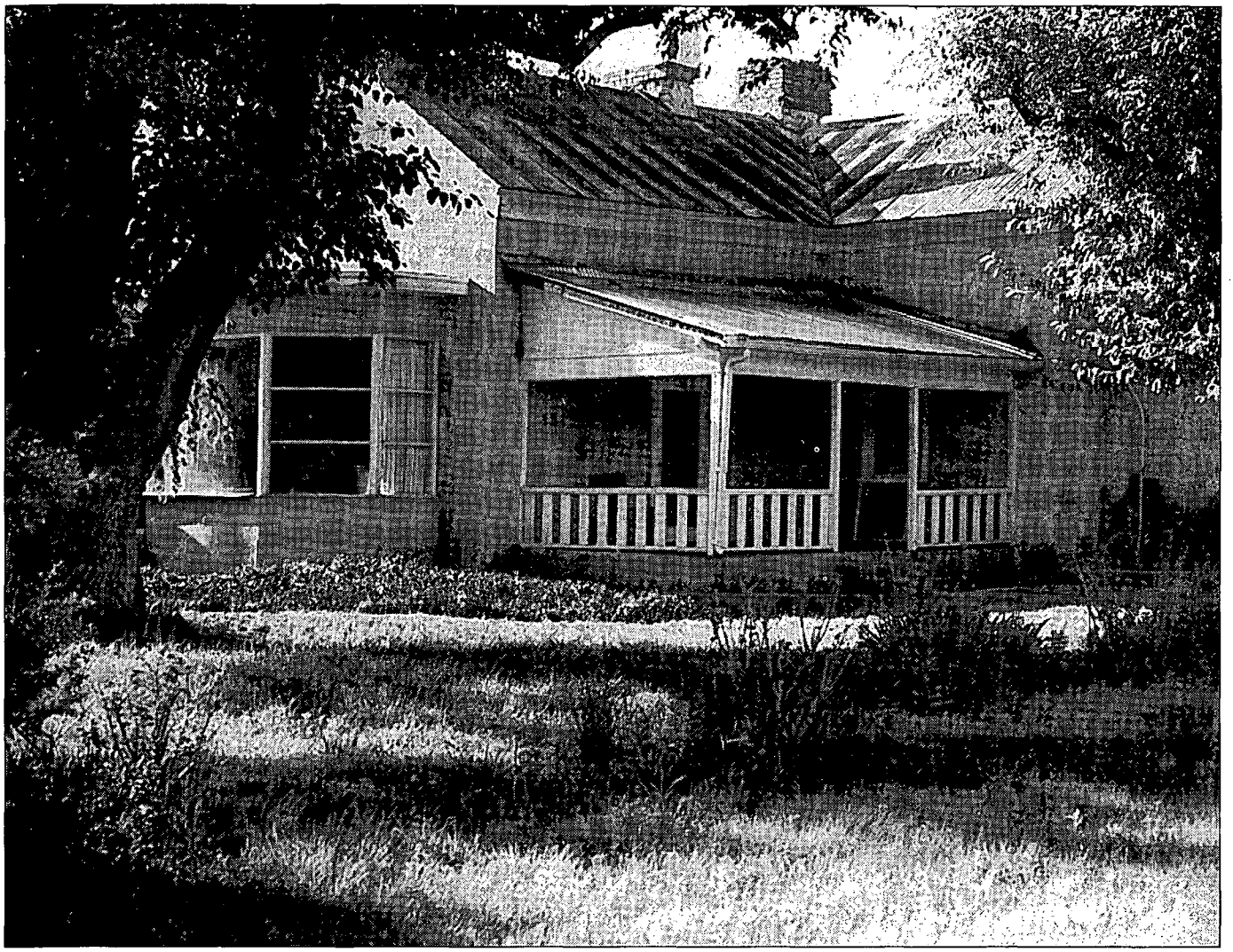

Photo by Charles S. Park

Part of the eight-room addition Walter Vail built for his bride, Margaret, in 1881. Note the bay window on the living room.

came looking for work. Two weeks out of Yuma, however, four riders approached the drive looking for the Cox brothers. In a gunfight that followed, Frank Cox was killed and Bill surrendered. Gathering cattle disturbed by the shots, Tom and Edward vowed never again to hire strangers.

The herd arrived at Warner's Ranch on April 5 after seventy-one days on the trail. Vail lost thirty head on the way but netted four dollars a head more than if he had shipped them by rail. After the drive, the Southern Pacific lowered its rates to their previous level, a triumph for Arizona cattlemen and a personal victory for Walter Vail.

Vail secured more grazing land in California, leased Catalina Island, and bought Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands off the southern California coast. He grazed cattle and sheep on the islands, which he eventually sold. In 1896 Walter moved Margaret and their family to California. Walter and Gates, who was by then a partner, diversified and invested in California's booming real estate market.

Vail's death was not as spectacular as his life. In 1906 he stepped off one Los Angeles streetcar and into the path of another. At age fifty-four, Walter Vail left to his wife and seven children the proceeds from a far-flung financial empire that had started with a $587 loan and hard work. At its peak, the Empire Ranch had included about one million acres of land and 40,000 head of cattle.

The family continued to run the ranch for a time. In 1928 the Chiricahua Cattle Company bought it, operating it as a cattle ranch until selling it to Gulf American Corporation in 1960 for real estate development. That corporation sold out to Anamax Mining Company which wanted the water rights and mineral potential. Later, Anamax put the property back on the market. Public support favored preserving the ranches and their natural resources, and in 1988 the property went into public ownership. Today the Bureau of Land Management controls what is left of the old Empire Ranch, leasing the land for cattle and preserving the old ranch house as a historical site.

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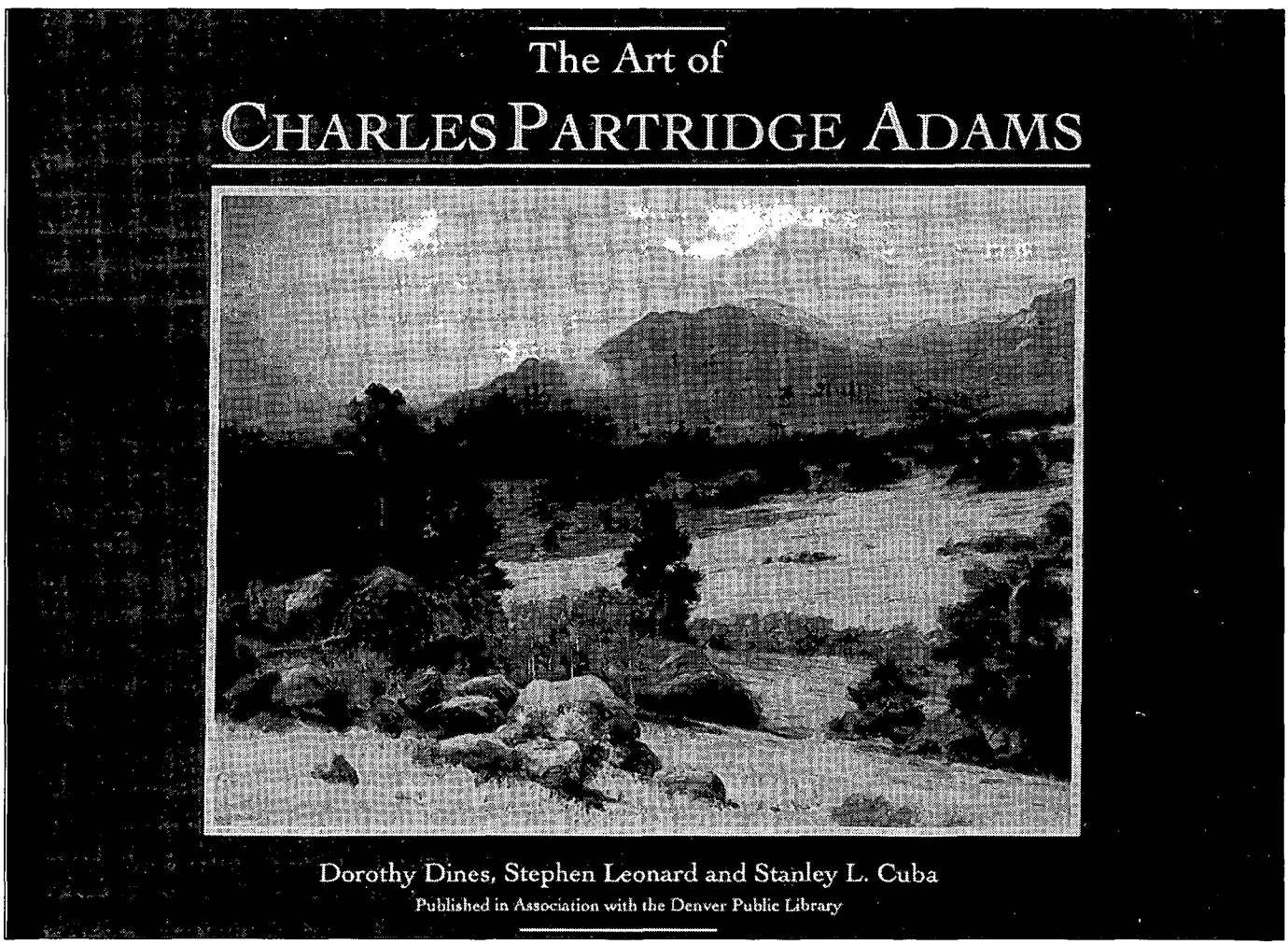
Western History Enters the TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

By JEANNE VARNELL

Western history will get a shot of late twentieth-century technology when the Denver, Colorado, public library system's new Central Library opens its automated doors March 25, 1995, in downtown Denver. With seven floors, 540,000 square feet of space, and forty-seven miles of shelves, the library is among the largest American urban libraries. Its crown jewel is the Western History and Genealogy Department on the fifth and sixth floors, where researchers will have access



Denver Public Library

This Charles Partridge Adams painting, part of the Denver Public Library's Western History Collection, was part of a recent art book from Fulcrum Publishing.

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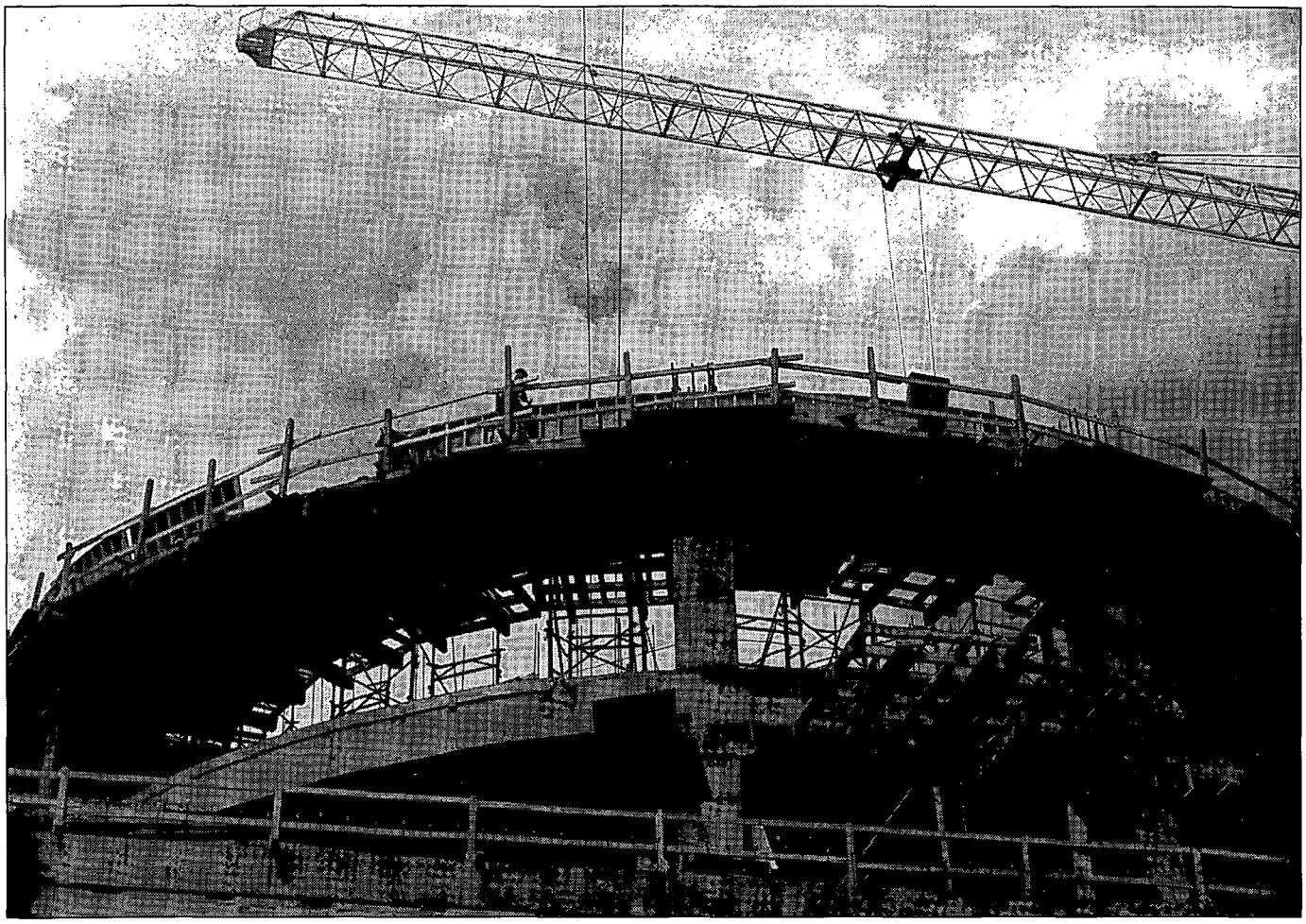

Photo by Roger Whitacre

The rotunda of the new Denver Public Library under construction.

to the world's largest public western Americana collection.

A western art gallery, including Albert Bierstadt's monumental oil painting "Estes Park," marks the entrance to the western history floors. Beyond the gallery soars the two-story Gates Western History Reading Room with its high windows overlooking the Rocky Mountains. Encircling it are a regional genealogy reading room, a western history photograph room, a map area, and a manuscript room.

The manuscript room is climate controlled to preserve its aging manuscripts, 75,000 rare books, only-known copies of travel guides, and pamphlets. Visitors can find journals of early missionaries to "Darkest Colorado," cookbooks, diaries, letters home from miners and homesteaders, and pioneers' scrapbooks filled with old menus and sheet music.

A major Buffalo Bill collection contains William F. Cody's letters, diaries, and Wild West posters. A popular railroad section offers railroad publicity material, timetables, tickets, and photographs.

The 500,000 photographs in the western history department's photograph room may be old, but the technology to view them is quite modern. Through photodigitization, visitors can call up on a computer screen any of 35,000 pictures indexed by subject or photographer. They can print selections on an attached printer or order copies for publishing.

Oversized tables scaled for map reading furnish the self-service map area, where visitors can spread out selections from 5,000 maps that date back to a seventeenth-century "California-as-an-island" map. The map room also has original drawings and maps of explorer John C. Frémont's expeditions, as well as land grants, mining maps, and city plats.

The 500,000 photographs in the Western History Department's photograph room may be old, but the technology to view them is quite modern. Through photodigitization, visitors can call up on a computer screen any of 35,000 pictures indexed by subject or photographer. They can print selections on an attached printer or order copies for publishing. The process is quick and easy,

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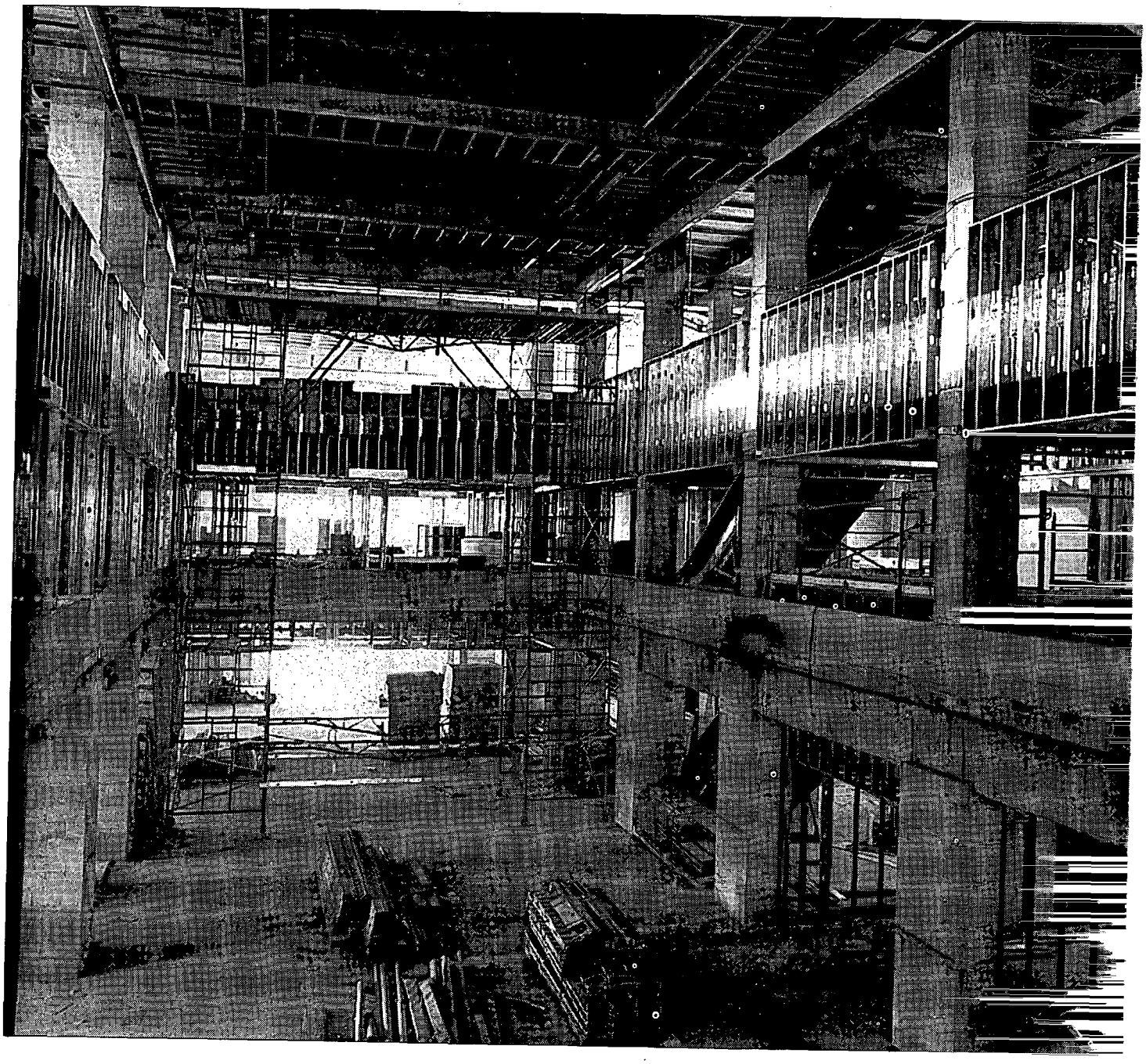
and it saves wear on precious photos. The photo collection includes photographs by William H. Jackson and Edward S. Curtis and David Barry's nineteenth-century glass plate negatives of Indians.

The seventh floor of the library houses the Vida Ellison Gallery. It showcases the library's 400-item western art collection, which includes paintings, sculptures, etchings, engravings, lithographs, and illustrations by such masters as Frederic Remington, Bierstadt, John J. Audubon, and George Elbert Burr.

The library's Southwest Genealogy Center contains 40,000 bound volumes of genealogical records and 60,000 microfilm pieces. The genealogy room offers census data, vital records, city directories, and Hispanic and church records. Guides are on hand to assist researchers.

Who uses the Western History Department? "People from all walks of life come to us for all kinds of information," Western History Manager Eleanor Gehres said. "We regularly get requests from history buffs in all fifty states: adventurers seeking clues to lost mines, authors looking for ideas for novels, researchers writing dissertations. Our most popular topics are Major John Chivington's letters and the Sand Creek Massacre; anything about Alferd Packer and Denver's own Molly Brown; the Tabors—Horace, Augusta, and Baby Doe, and the Denver Mint robbery, which



Schlessman Hall under construction at the new Central Library of the Denver Public Library.

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actually occurred in an armored truck outside the mint."

Western Americana is popular in Europe, too, where people reenact historic battles and gunfights. "They want copies of photographs, maps, and manuscripts so they can see how things looked back then," Gehres added.

Gehres revealed some surprises in the special collections section, such as Eugene Field's erotic poems in a small, rare book titled *The Stag Party*. Another book, ironically called *Complete Proverbs*, contains the calling cards of Denver madams.

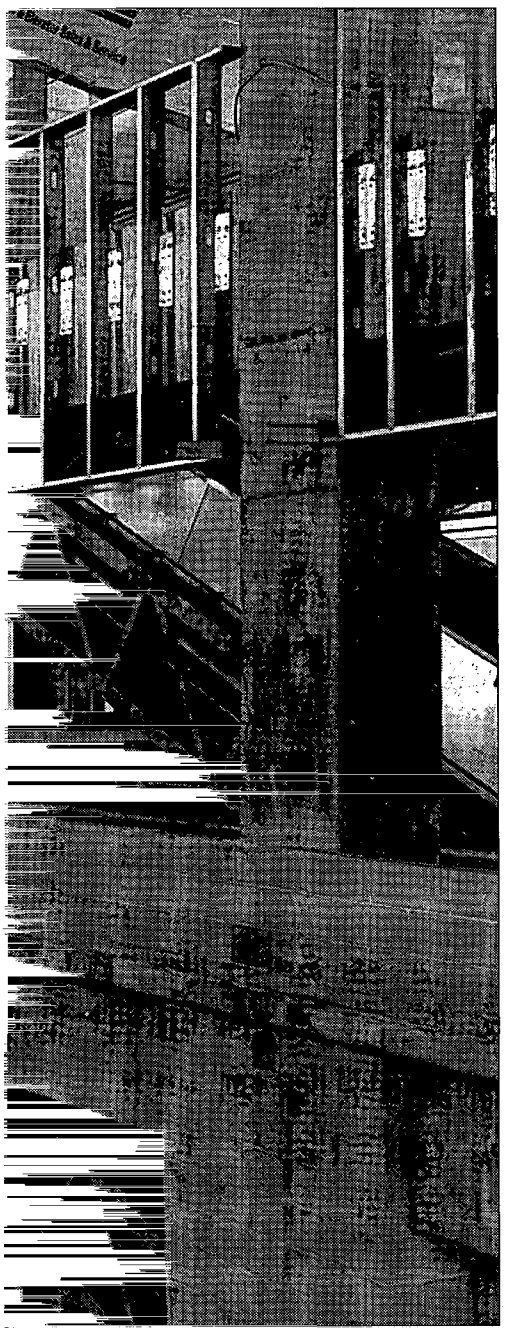

Photo by Roger Whitacre

Western History Department, Denver Public Library

Selected items from the Western History Department's collection of mining district laws and regulations.

Writers and researchers use early newspapers as an important primary resource. The Western History Department and the Colorado Historical Museum across the street contain extensive files of newspapers published in Colorado and major American cities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Western History Department has installed new microfilm reading machines to help with newspaper research.

The library's Southwest Genealogy Center contains 40,000 bound volumes of genealogical records and 60,000 microfilm pieces. The genealogy room offers census data, vital records, city directories, and Hispanic and church records. Guides are on hand to assist researchers.

Gehres said the department's most prized newspapers are a first issue of *The Rocky Mountain News*, dated April 23, 1859, and New York newspaperman Horace Greeley's famous report of mining prospects

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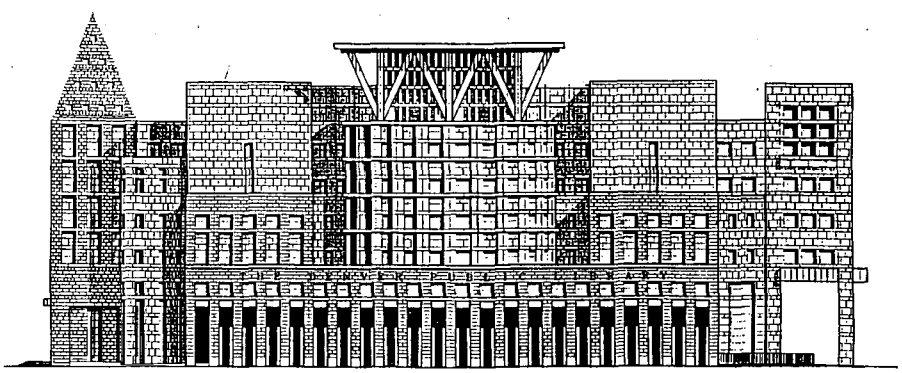
Customer service is the library's bench mark. The well-trained staff is ready to teach library patrons how to use the technology that will come on line when the library opens. For example, the library contains CARL (Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries), an electronic connection with 420 library catalogs nationwide; CD-ROM jukeboxes that allow up to one hundred patrons to access the same information simultaneously from any personal computer in the library; and Internet, a global computer network that links users to universities, private industries, governments, libraries, and other worldwide information resources.

The history of Denver's library system goes back to 1859 when prospector A.E. Pierce, homesick for current reading material, ordered a shipment of books from a publisher in the East to start a bookstore. When they arrived, Pierce spread them on a rough board table in a cottonwood grove on the banks of Cherry Creek. His fellow settlers quickly snapped them up, and he ordered more books. In early November 1859, when Pierce had established himself as a book and magazine dealer, he started Denver's first circulating library with fifty books that he rented "for those who desire good reading but do not want to buy books outright."

The *Rocky Mountain News* announced on January 4, 1860, "This week, A.E. Pierce extended his advertising in the public press. It's but a few weeks since he commenced the news and periodical business on a rough board table

The history of Denver's library system goes back to 1859 when prospector A.E. Pierce, homesick for current reading material, ordered a shipment of books from a publisher in the East to start a bookstore. When they arrived, Pierce spread them on a rough board table in a cottonwood grove on the banks of Cherry Creek. His fellow settlers quickly snapped them up, and he ordered more books.



Denver Public Library

The south elevation of the new Denver Public Library.

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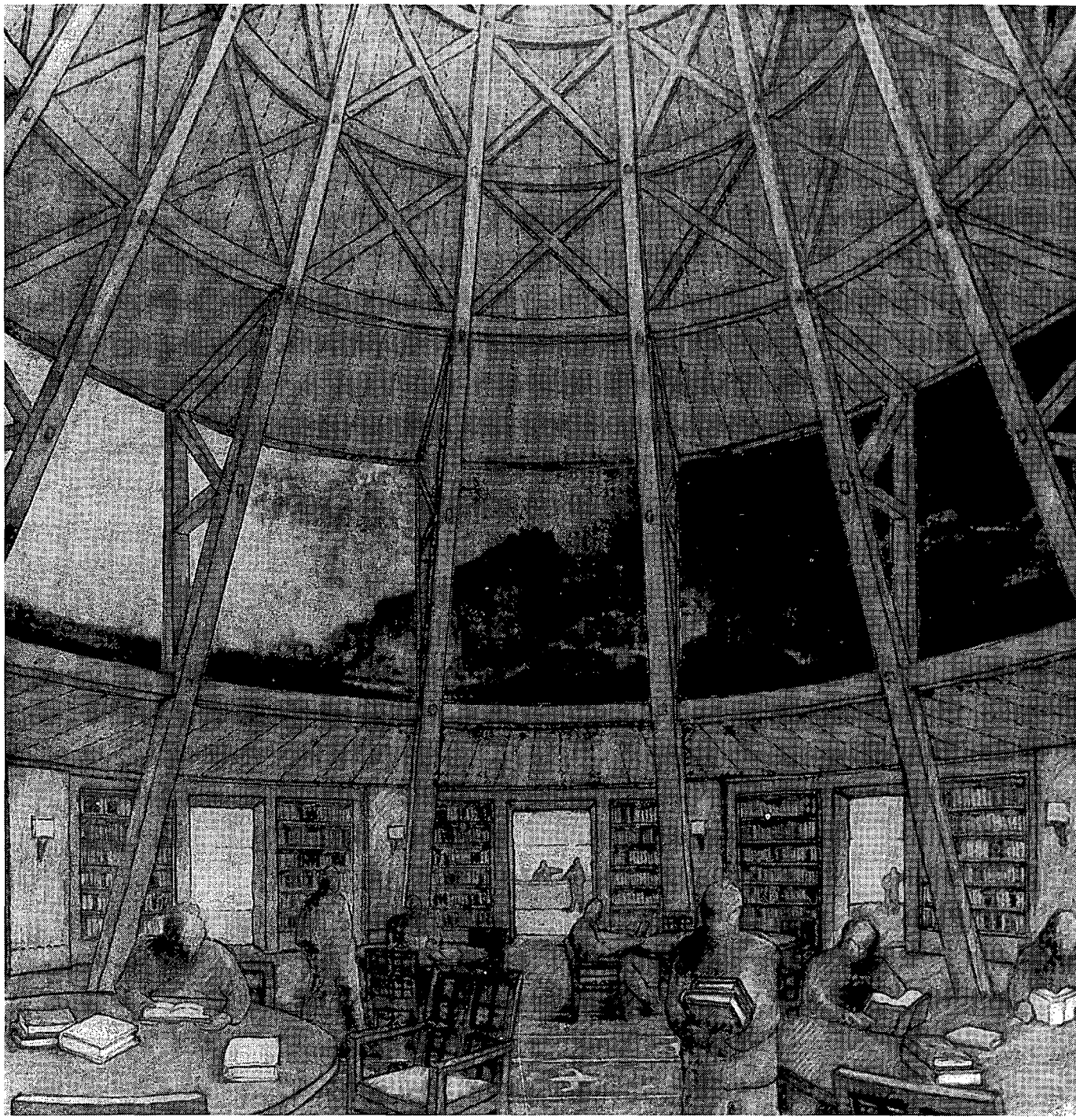

Denver Public Library

An artist's conception of the Gates Western History Reading Room at the new Denver Public Library. The timbers in the architectural design are recycled from a seventy-year-old mill.

under the shade of a tree (without any top) in the streets of Auraria [which merged with Denver on April 5, 1860]. Already he has a sign up in Auraria and this week announces the opening of a similar one in Denver."

On February 18, 1860, Denver and Auraria residents organized a subscription library and reading room association. They appointed a librarian and set up a reading room on the east bank of Cherry Creek.

On July 10, a group of Denver men drafted the Chamber of Commerce Library's constitution, bylaws, and roll of membership, organizing the first library and reading room association in Denver. Years later, treasurer A.E. Pierce wrote, "When this association was formed, Denver was a little, rude hamlet of log huts. The...building in which [the library] was born, bred and died being a one roomed affair that stood upon the ground where now stands...City Hall."

Subsequent libraries came and went, housed in single rooms, cabins, store fronts, and in 1889, in the

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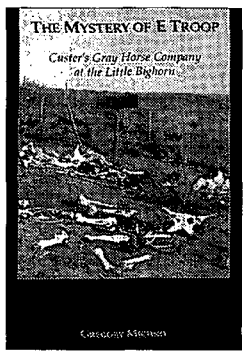

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Denver High School. The Denver Chamber of Commerce "City Library" consolidated with the high school library in 1894.

Dr. Malcolm Wyer, city librarian from 1929 to 1951, originated the Denver Public Library Western History Department. Gehres recalled a legend of how Willa Cather arrived in Denver in the 1920s to research her book, *Death Comes for the Archbishop.* Cather soon

Gehres recalled a legend of how Willa Cather arrived in Denver in the 1920s to research her book, Death Comes for the Archbishop. Cather soon complained the research material there was no good, and the only good resources for the West were in the Midwest or San Francisco. Possibly stung by her remark, Dr. Wyer proposed a western Americana collection.

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Possibly stung by her remark, Dr. Wyer proposed a western Americana collection. His proposal was approved in 1929. First, he bought a small Remington drawing for eighteen dollars and twenty volumes of Edward Curtis reproductions, of which very few original sets remain.

When that first collection appeared in 1935, no one had any idea that the Western History Department would grow to its present size. While modern technology definitely enhances the collection, the Western History Department's emphasis remains where it always has been—on the old books, manuscripts, and masterpieces that preserve the American West.

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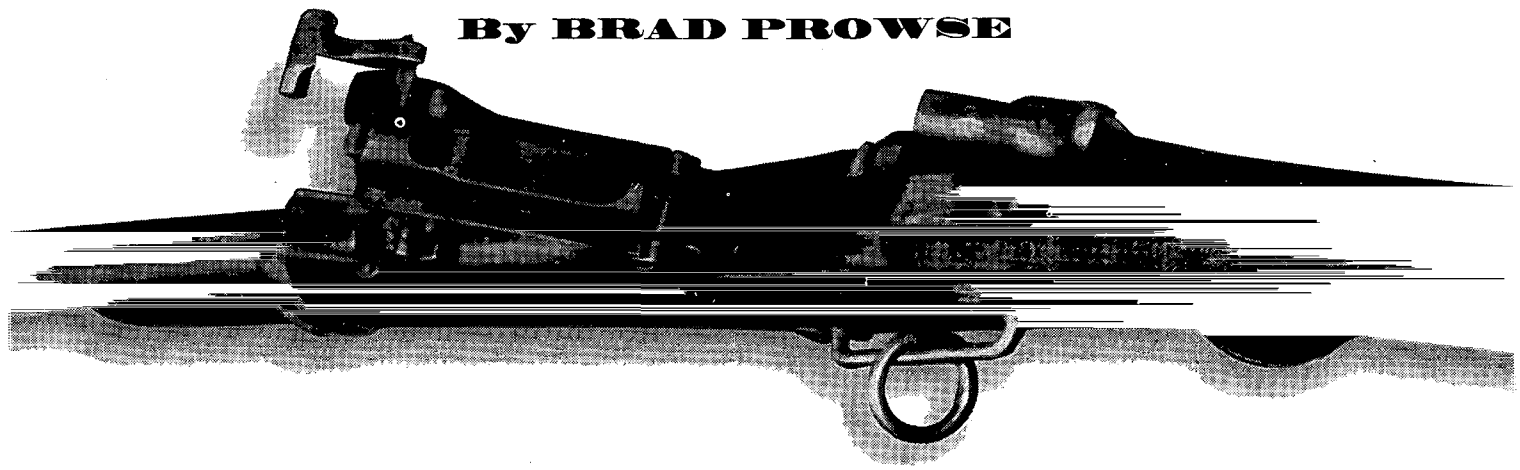
RAPID FIRE

THE TRAPDOOR SPRINGFIELD

By BRAD PROWSE

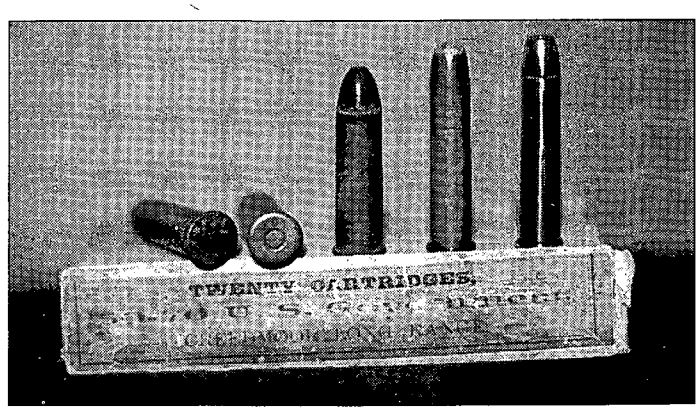


Author's Photo

A view of the rifle's breechblock with the trapdoor open. The "L" shaped lever at the top right of the block releases a cam to open the action.

The United States Army's new rifle was controversial from the start. It had a new design, a greater rate of fire than any previous rifle, and fired a faster, smaller caliber bullet. Detractors criticized its notorious shell extraction problem in battle. Soldiers from a later era might think this describes the .223 caliber M-16 rifle, but in fact it fits the Model 1873 .45-70 Springfield rifle.

The federal government faced a dilemma at the end of the Civil War. Even before the war, arms designs were advancing steadily, but the war speeded firearms technology, and by war's end numerous successful single-shot and repeating breechloaders were in use. Obviously the government needed to rearm the peacetime army with a breech-loading rifle, but it had a staggering war debt to contend with.



Author's Photo

Ammunition for the trapdoor Springfield. From left, a copper-cased, inside primed .50-70 cartridge; two brass-cased, outside primed .50-70s; a .45-70 round; and a modern cartridge.

In its arsenals the army had more than one million perfectly good muzzle-loading rifles, most .58 caliber. Erskine Allin, master armorer of the government's Springfield, Massachusetts, armory had an idea to use some of the stockpiled weapons. Allin invented a breech-loading action consisting of a trough of steel, closed at the rear and open at the front for attachment of a barrel. Above the barrel chamber and attached by a hinge was a breechblock that fit the open trough in the action. When the breechblock was swung up—not unlike a trapdoor—the chamber in the barrel was exposed for loading. Once the chamber was loaded the breechblock was then swung down, securing the cartridge and holding the breech closed by a thumb-operated cam latch at the rear. The block was held tight in the action until the

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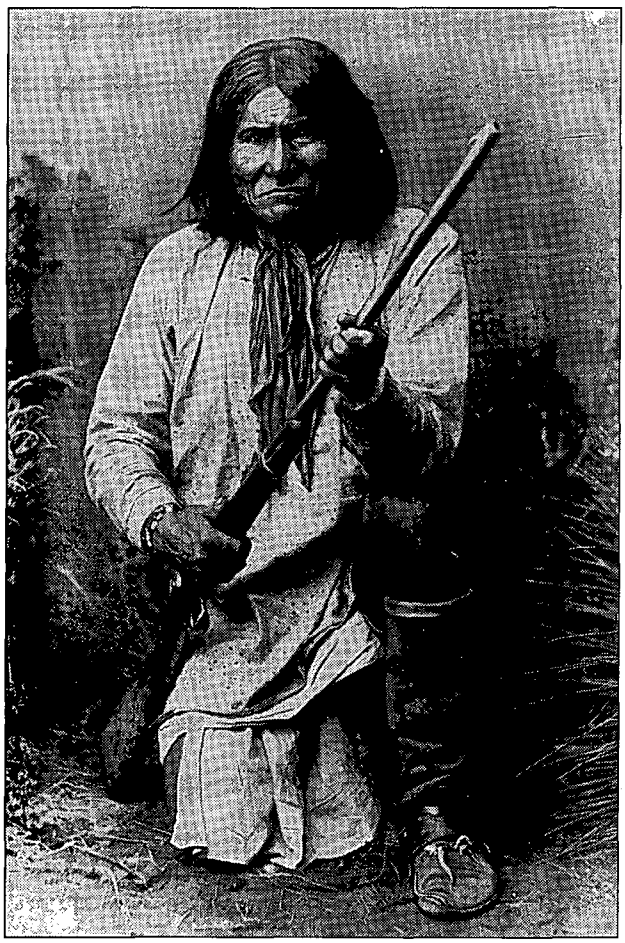
cam latch was lifted, allowing the cam to disengage.

A firing pin ran at a diagonal through the breechblock, reaching from the hammer on the side of the muzzleloader to the cartridge primer at the center of the chamber. To convert the muzzleloader to a breechloader, a gunsmith needed only to cut off the breech end of the muzzleloader's barrel, attach it to the new breechblock, and flatten the face of the hammer. The weapon, firing a .58 caliber cartridge, became the Model 1865.

That rifle would undergo tests and modifications over the years, changing from .58 caliber to .50 caliber, then, in 1873, to .45-70-405. That meant a bore size of .45 inches and a bullet weighing 405 grains fired by 70 grains of black powder. The .45-70-405 version became the Model 1873. It underwent other minor changes but remained basically the same until a newer arm replaced it 1894. We will refer to all of the versions as "trapdoors," although that term apparently originated in the twentieth century.

The Model 1866, a modification of the Model 1865, soon began to replace rifles in the field. On August 1, 1867, they got their baptism of fire in the Hayfield Fight when 800 Cheyenne warriors surprised a group of army haycutters near Fort C.F. Smith, Montana Territory. Fighting from a corral of logs, the soldiers used their new trapdoors to good effect. The Cheyennes charged, expecting the soldiers to have to ram a new load into their muzzleloaders. Instead, the troopers kept up a steady fire, driving the Indians back with small loss to themselves.

The next day, ninety miles away near Fort Phil Kearny, Wyoming Territory, 500 Sioux, part of a force of about 3,000 warriors, attacked thirty-two woodcutters who forted up behind overturned wagon boxes. The defenders in the Wagon Box Fight kept up a steady wall of fire; only six of them were killed compared to forty or more Indians. The Indians quickly caught on to the breechloaders and sought some of their own.



National Archives

The Apache warrior Geronimo holds a trapdoor carbine in this famous photo.

The Springfield eventually armed all United States land forces as the army ordered in the Spencers and Sharps from the field. By the time the 1873 model was issued, it was the standard arm. It would figure in every Indian fight from then on—the Modoc Wars, the Nez Percé battles, the Apache Wars, and Wounded Knee.

The trapdoor served until the .30-40 Krag-Jorgensen replaced it in 1894. Even then it took several years to make enough Krags to arm all troops. Volunteer and militia units in Cuba during the Spanish-American War used the trapdoors against the Spanish, who had high velocity, smokeless powder, bolt-action Mausers. The troops hated the trapdoors because billowing white smoke from the black powder revealed their positions.

Financial and political considerations influenced the trapdoor Springfield's adoption, and over the years the weapon had many detractors. Still, in 1866 it was not a bad rifle, although the Sharps and the Remington rolling block rifles had stronger actions. As time passed, however, so many other, better arms were developed that it became harder and harder to defend its use. For one thing, the action was difficult to load unless a soldier was standing because the breechblock tended to drop closed when the muzzle was tilted upwards. Worse, when trying to load the carbine on horseback the action flapped about and it took a steady hand to pull a cartridge out of a leather pouch or a belt loop and shove it into the chamber. Dangling on the end of a sling at the trooper's side as he rode, the action could flop open and allow the cartridge to drop out.

THOSE CONCERNS were academic—hitting anything from horseback was difficult. The most practical weapons for horseback at close range were revolvers and sabers, and very few swords ever saw use in the Indian Wars. A pistol, with its five or six shots, was easier to manage while trying to control a horse with the left hand. Rifles were better used when cavalrymen fought on foot, and that is where many critics thought the army made a mistake.

The trapdoor performed well for the infantry. The slow-moving foot soldiers often could not close with Indians in the field, but they were

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formidable on garrison duty or guarding slow-moving wagon trains or wood and hay cutting details. They knew how to dig in, and the Indians soon learned to respect the accurate fire of long-barreled Springfields in the hands of the infantry.

Cavalrymen, however, were not supposed to dig in. They were mobile warriors and sacrificed the unity and stability of infantry for the ability to roam about. To offset that loss they should have had repeaters. If Custer and his men had still been armed with their seven-shot Spencers, the Battle of the Little Bighorn might have ended quite differently.

Politicians and army officers often argued against a single-shot rifle, saying the Indians were well armed with repeaters, but that is misleading. Indians tried to acquire repeaters, but they could not just buy them at a general mercantile store. They had to rely on gunrunners, traders, private individuals—anyone willing to sell them a firearm—and prices were steep. Even a handful of cartridges could cost many pelts or buffalo robes.

Still, some Indians managed to get their hands on breechloaders—some of them captured trapdoors—and repeaters. Reports from officers in the field, and later archaeological research, indicate that up to ten percent of the Cheyenne and Sioux warriors at the Little Bighorn may have had repeaters. If the warriors numbered 1,500, that means Custer's command faced 150 repeaters. If a Winchester could fire, conservatively, five shots for every one from a trooper's carbine, and a Spencer three shots for every one, that would give the 150 Indians alone the relative strength of about 500 warriors. That is almost as many men as Custer had before he split his command. Against such a force, the single-shot Springfield was at a serious disadvantage.

Some frontier officers questioned the marksmanship of the Indians, and indeed, with ammunition so dear, warriors did little target practice. They were also notorious for not cleaning their firearms, and if one became broken or disabled they had little chance of repairing it. Still, because the government was stingy with practice ammunition, a soldier might not have fired his rifle much more than an Indian warrior.

To be fair, the two best-known repeaters of the day, the Spencer and the Winchester, had numerous defects. They were more prone to breakage or seizing up with dirt on the trail, and neither took a cartridge as powerful as the trapdoor. Even the carbine loading of .45-55 was more powerful than the .52 caliber Spencer round or the .44 Henry. Furthermore, a new Springfield cost about ten dollars; a Winchester cost between thirty dollars and fifty dollars—a serious consideration for a government paying off a war debt.

If, with its large, outside hammer and musket-like appearance, the Springfield was ungainly alongside the sleeker repeaters, it did have its virtues. It was rugged, and the action was well closed to dirt and sand. Its big "punkin-roller" bullet, 405 grains at first, increased to 500 grains in 1881, was highly accurate for its time. Freeman R. Bull, a machinist at the Springfield armory and a marksman, did some shooting for record in the early 1880s using a trapdoor rifle and the 500 grain cartridge. Shooting ten rounds, at 100 yards he put all of them in a 4.5-inch circle. At 500 yards, all fit in a twenty-one-inch circle, certainly grouped closely enough to make reliable hits on a mansized target. At 1,000 yards he put all his shots in a forty-six-inch circle. At 1,500 yards, nearly nine-tenths of a mile, every shot landed within an eight-foot, five-inch circle.

The most serious indictment of the trapdoor rifle, however, was that a shell could become stuck in its chamber and render the weapon inoperable. Some survivors from the Reno-Benteen force at the Little Bighorn, along with Sioux and Cheyenne warriors, leveled that charge. Indians saw Custer's troopers working with knifes, desperately trying to pry stuck shells from their carbines. Soldiers at the Reno-Benteen position of the battlefield also mentioned the problem. Later, on the

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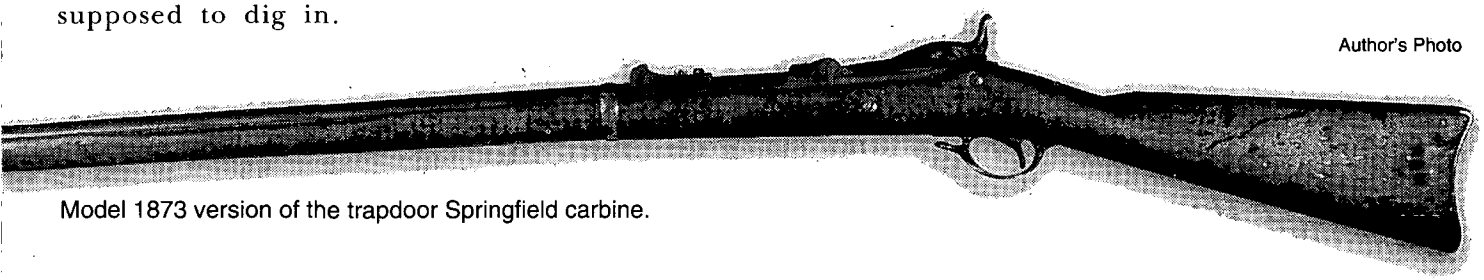

Model 1873 version of the trapdoor Springfield carbine.

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Custer site, knives with broken tips were found along with carbines that soldiers had cast away because of stuck shells.

The trapdoor's tendency to jam was partly the ammunition's fault. Black powder did not burn clean but left a grimy black residue that fouled the barrel and action. The residue built up after sustained firing, and a shell casing could expand in the chamber and become stuck, almost as if welded there.

The extractor on the Springfield was a piece of steel shaped like a wide, blunt knife blade. The blade had a hole in one end that the breechblock hinge pin passed through. As the breech opened, it snapped the blade rearward, catching the rim of the shell and driving it out of the chamber. In a clean gun, the action worked. But when heat, dirt, or black powder jammed the shell, the blade would sometimes slice through the shell's rim. A trooper might be able to drive the shell out with a ramrod, if he had one handy. Or he could try to pick the shell out with a knife if he had one—they weren't standard issue. The entire end of the shell might even tear off.

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Without at least a rim to pry against a soldier had no way of getting the shell out in battle.

Eventually the army issued a headless shell extracting kit, but it was probably difficult to use in combat. Ammunition manufacturers finally controlled the problem in 1888, when they made the cartridge head a solid piece, replacing the earlier "folded head" design, and switched from copper to stronger brass cartridge cases.

The trapdoor underwent only minor modifications over the years. The earliest sights had no provisions for windage, later sights did. When the army used up its supply of Civil War-surplus triangular bayonets, it tried several different types of bayonets. Regardless, the last trapdoors manufactured in 1893 would have looked quite familiar to soldiers in the Wagon Box Fight.

However well received the trapdoor was in 1866, by the 1880s the question was not if the army would adapt a smaller caliber, modern repeating rifle, but when and what type. The biggest problem for army trial boards was that Europe was making most of the advances in arms manufacturing. The United States Army wanted a new repeating rifle that fired higher velocity, small caliber bullets, but it had to wait for the technology to get to America. Once it did, the army lost little time adopting the five-shot, bolt-action Krag-Jorgensen. It remained the army's standard rifle from 1894 until 1903, when the now-famous Springfield .30—03 (soon changed to the .30—06 cartridge) replaced it.

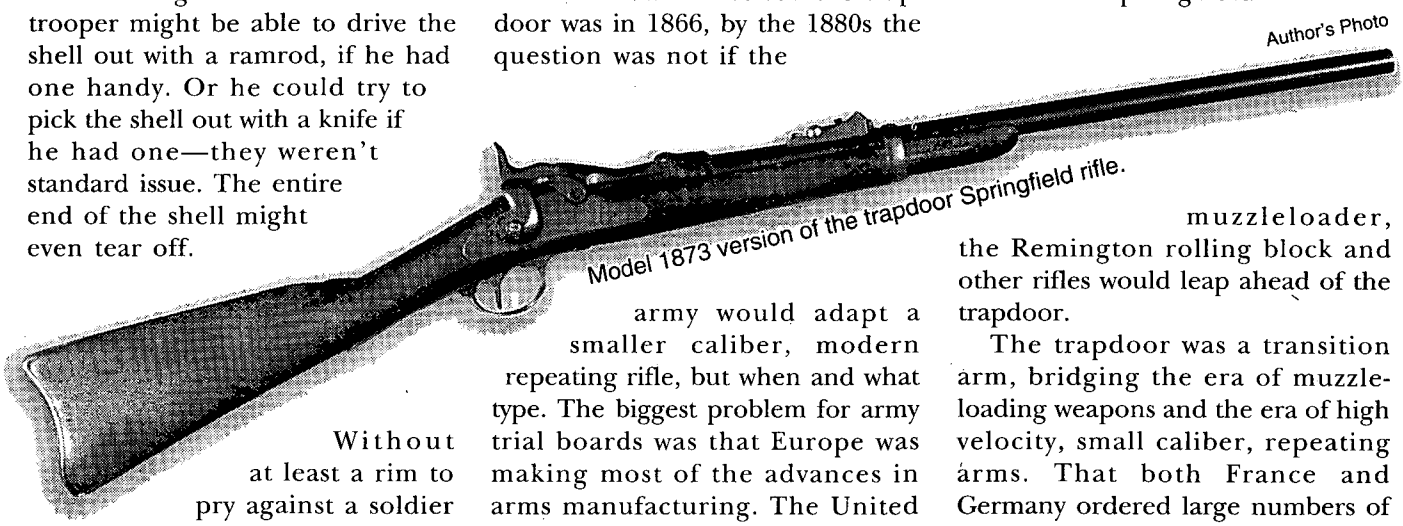
Still, many trapdoors remained in use for some time, and the army issued them again to home guard units during World War I. As late as the 1930s United States arsenals still included trapdoors. The total run of the trapdoor rifles and carbines was more than 500,000. That might seem excessive at a time when the standing army numbered only 25,000 men, but the military did not want to be caught unprepared as it had at the start of the Civil War.

So, how should historians evaluate the trapdoor Springfield? Was it just a patchwork rifle pieced together by the politics of the day? Or was it a sturdy, reliable, accurate weapon that was as good as the time and technology had to offer?

Certainly politics influenced the army's choice of rifle after the Civil War, but in 1866 the trapdoor was about as good an infantry rifle as any other. The problem was, the times were changing fast. Just as the trapdoor had jumped far ahead of the 1861 Springfield muzzleloader, the Remington rolling block and other rifles would leap ahead of the trapdoor.

The trapdoor was a transition arm, bridging the era of muzzleloading weapons and the era of high velocity, small caliber, repeating arms. That both France and Germany ordered large numbers of surplus Model 1866 .50-70s during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 proves that armies considered it a suitable military arm.

The trapdoor was a transitional arm in another sense: it served the United States Army as it closed its frontier experience and stood ready to become a world power. Other arms could certainly have done the job as well or better during that time, but the task fell to the trapdoor Springfield.



Author's Photo

Model 1873 version of the trapdoor Springfield rifle.

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Early-day Tourist

Camping Out in the Yellowstone, 1882, by Mary Bradshaw Richards; edited by William W. Slaughter. (University of Utah Press, 101 University Services Building, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112. $10.95, paper bound.)

"May you live to visit, enjoy, and remember the Yellowstone National Park," wrote Mary Bradshaw Richards in a series of letters she sent to the *Salem* (Massachusetts) *Observer* during a ten-day trip to the Yellowstone in 1882. The park was then a primitive campsite, no longer "out-back and beyond" but not yet improved with roads, hotels, and services.

Richards and her husband had a wall tent and such necessary items as eggs (packed in oatmeal) and a coffee pot. They traveled in a canvas-covered spring wagon, "rather stiff in the joints," but fit for its purpose. Their guides were "a capital driver" and "an accomplished cook" who could, Richards recorded, shoot a pine-hen on the wing, dress and broil it, and serve it with a sauce better than that served at Delmonico's. Although Richards writes that "to strike a tent, clear table, feed and harness the horses and to start was the happy occupation of an hour," she gives no indication that she and her husband did any more than watch. They were middle-aged, well-traveled, and, in every sense of the word, tourists.

Richards had prepared and studied for the trip. She was a good observer of nature and had a strong sense of history. She knew that not too many years had passed since the tragic flight of the Nez Percé Indians through that very region. Sometimes she was worried—she stuffed blankets in the cracks between the tent bottom and the ground to keep out pests. Other times she was frightened, as when they visited the sink holes of Mammoth Hot Springs Gorge or explored an extinct geyser.

Editor Slaughter, a photo archivist for the Historical Department Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Salt Lake City, has thoroughly annotated these letters. His footnotes add greatly to the book's interest. He describes the popularity of bathhouses and the belief that hot mineral waters were therapeutic; he points out that the falls Richards

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describes as 150 feet high are actually eighty-four feet high; and he explains that littering and vandalism were major problems in the 1880s.

Perhaps the value of Richards' journal lies both in Slaughter's annotation and in Richards' own subtle straightforwardness. Where professional writers might distort and exaggerate, Richards was subtle and candid. The result is a picture of Yellowstone as early park developers must have wished it would stay forever.—*Judy Alter, Fort Worth, Texas.*

A Time of Change

Chiefs, Agents and Soldiers, by William Haas Moore. (University of New Mexico Press, 1720 Lomas Boulevard, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-1591. $45.00 cloth bound.)

In the late-nineteenth century, some whites saw Indians as a vanishing race destined for extinction or total assimilation into the American mainstream. Others thought defeating the Indians justified taking away their land and placing them on reservations. Even the most kindly reformers wanted the Indians confined for their own protection.

The Navahos of western New Mexico and eastern Arizona, however, managed to shape their own destiny even after being exiled from their homelands for more than four years. Their survival and adaptation are the subjects of William Haas Moore's book, *Chiefs, Agents, and Soldiers.*

Moore begins with the Navahos' surrender and exile to the Bosque Redondo reservation in eastern New Mexico in early 1864. From the start, the reservation was ill-conceived and badly executed. At one point more than 8,000 Navahos and some Apaches lived there.

While at the Bosque the Navahos tried to cooperate and adapt. They made dietary changes, tried European-American farming techniques, and allowed chosen chiefs to lead. But they refused to give up their cultural core.

By June 1868 the government

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admitted the failure of the Bosque Redondo experiment and allowed the miserable Navahos to begin their long walk home to resettle on a portion of the land which had once been theirs. Moore clearly describes how they readjusted over the next fifteen years.

Chiefs, Agents, and Soldiers covers a watershed period in Navaho cultural and economic development never before examined in such detail. Moore has uncovered a great deal of valuable material, written it in a highly readable way, and spiced it with interesting anecdotes. The book is excellent.—*Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Placitas, New Mexico.*

Reexamining Sutter

John Sutter and a Wider West, edited by Kenneth N. Owens. (University of Nebraska Press, 312 North 14th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0484. $22.50 cloth bound.)

Students of John Sutter may want to purchase this slim volume for the sake of a complete library. But those of us more generally interested in the history of the far West can let it slip, unimpeded, into bibliographical oblivion.

There is nothing really new here in terms of information, although the first section, a reprinting of Sutter's "diary," is, indeed, useful. Actually, the diary is an 1857 reminiscence based on his original New Helvetia diary, first published in a San Francisco journal in 1878 and not again until 1932, when it appeared as a limited edition rare book from the Grabhorn brothers. Thus it has been virtually unobtainable until now, but it runs to only twenty-five pages.

The rest of the book is short on objective information and heavy on opinion, largely negative, by five professors. Four of them take turns bashing Sutter, fitting him with clay feet, and blaming him for everything from the decline of the Indians to the wrecking of the Sacramento Valley as a wilderness Eden.—*Richard H. Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

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The Ear-Cutter

By CHUCK PARSONS

Jack Slade, who once killed an enemy and cut off his ears, was a complex western character about whom Sheila R. Hodges, Denver, Colorado, would like to know more.

His real name was Joseph Alfred Slade. Born in 1829, he was the son of Charles Slade, who was once a United States marshal in Illinois, a successful businessman, legislator, and congressman.

In May 1847, during the Mexican War, Slade enlisted in Company A, First Illinois Infantry, and went to New Mexico Territory. When he was mustered out on October 16, 1848, Slade was still a private.

In 1850 Slade reportedly killed a man with a rock and had to leave Illinois. What he did during the next few years is unknown.

In the late 1850s he was a wagon boss in California, freighting on the Overland Trail. Lew L. Callaway, author of *Montana's Righteous Hangmen: The Vigilantes in Action*, reported that Slade killed another man about 1860, but no details have survived, not even the name of the victim.

Slade became a stage driver, then an agent at Kearney, Nebraska, for the Overland Stage Line. He drew the attention of express businessman Benjamin F. Ficklin, who selected him as district superintendent for the Sweetwater division from Julesburg, Colorado, to South Pass, Wyoming. The section was the roughest on the road but Slade proved himself worthy of the challenge.

Slade developed a reputation as a tough fighting man. He may have made his own laws in dealing with thieves and corrupt officials on the line, but details are lacking. Nevertheless, he cleaned up the Sweetwater division.

Perhaps the most controversial incident of his career occurred when he clashed with suspected criminal Jules Reni. Reni once severely wounded Slade, but the lat-

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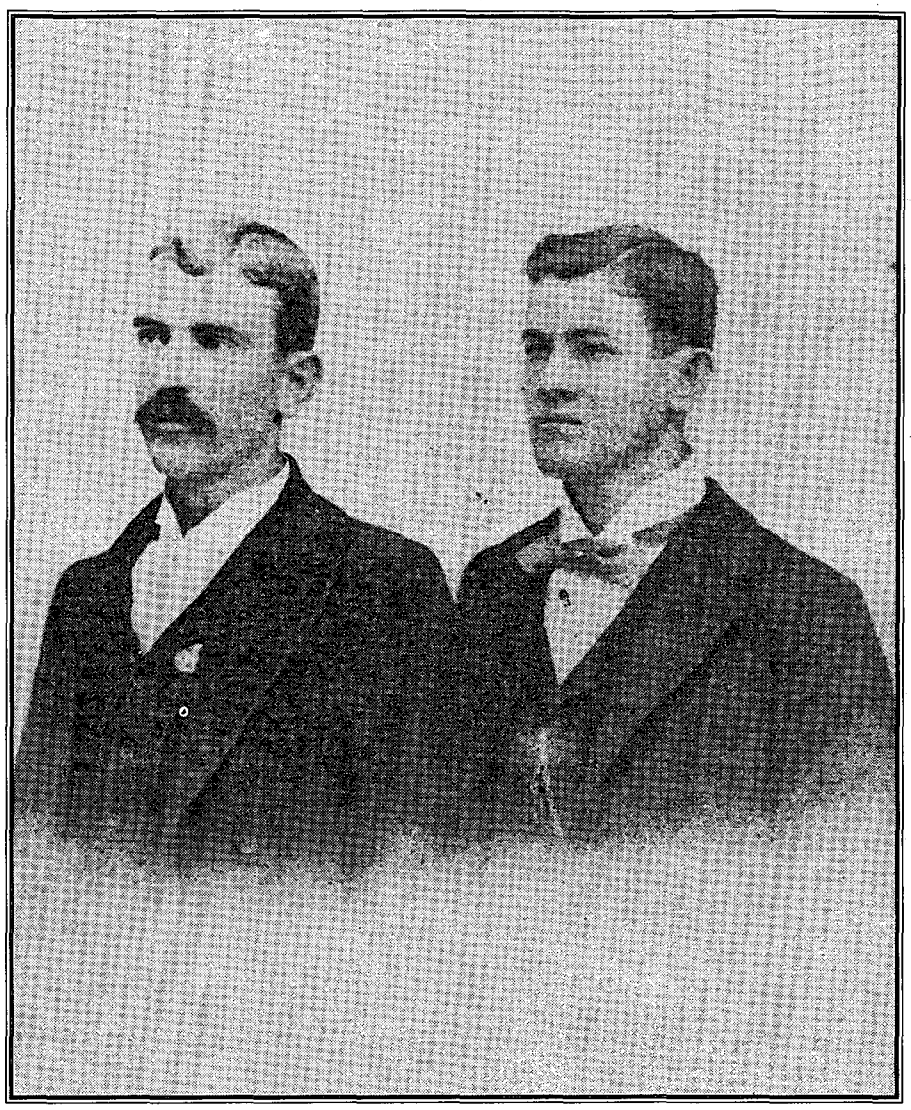
ter recovered and captured Reni. He lashed Reni to a snubbing post, slowly shot him to death, then cut off his ears as mementos.

After that, Slade was given charge of the Rocky Ridge division just west of the Sweetwater section. Many outlaws had fled there, but he methodically cleaned it up as well.

In 1862 Slade was through with the Overland, and he embarked on a course of self-destruction. His drinking increased, as did his reckless behavior. He followed a gold rush to Virginia City, Montana, where he established a freighting business and a ranch.

When sober Slade was a good man; when drinking he was destructive and riotous. He ran afoul of Montana vigilantes and ignored their warnings to behave himself. Finally, on May 10, 1864, vigilantes had had enough and decided Slade had to die. They gave him time to write a letter to his wife, then lynched him.

Slade's widow, Maria, tried to have his body moved to Carlyle, Illinois, a community his father had founded, but she was unable to complete the trip. Slade was buried in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Courtesy of Frederick Nolan

Texas Rangers N.O. Reynolds (left) and Charles L. Nevill. Wounded outlaw Sam Bass surrendered to Nevill in 1878.

Little-Known Ranger

The story "Frank Jackson: Texas Bandit Cavalier" in the May 1994 *True West* mentions Texas Ranger C.L. Nevill. Daniel D. Pearce, Detour Village, Michigan, wants to know more about Nevill and his life as a lawman.

Charles L. Nevill was a Texas Ranger in the 1870s and later served as sheriff of Presidio County, Texas. He was born at Carthage, Alabama, April 6, 1855, the son of Zachary L. and Anne Lewis Nevill. When Nevill was three years old the family moved to Fayette County, Texas, where he grew up.

Nevill joined the Texas Rangers on May 25, 1874, when he enlisted as a private in Company D, Frontier Battalion, under long-time Indian fighter Cicero R. Perry. He also served under Dan Roberts, J.M. Denton, Neal Coldwell, and N.O. Reynolds. When Reynolds resigned, Nevill was promoted to captain of Company E. He served in that capacity until he resigned on November 25, 1882.

Nevill never received much attention during his Ranger years, usually because he worked with several other men. For example, he was one of the group who arrested the Horrell brothers in July 1877. In July 1878 he and other Rangers rode from San Saba to Round Rock in an effort to capture the Sam Bass gang. The group arrived after Bass was mortally wounded in a street fight; Nevill and a scout arrested the dying Bass the next day.

After serving as a Ranger, Nevill was elected sheriff of Presidio County on November 7, 1882. He served in that office until November 6, 1888. He later served as a collector of back taxes and deputy clerk in San Antonio, Texas, then was elected clerk of the district court in Bexar County.

Nevill married Sarah Ellen Crosson on January 4, 1883. They had eight children. Nevill died June 13, 1906, at his home in San Antonio, and he is buried in San Antonio City Cemetery number six.

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The Far West

Dave Rowland, Peacehaven, East Sussex, England, wants to know what happened to the *Far West,* the steamer that transported wounded soldiers to Bismarck, North Dakota, for medical attention after the battle of the Little Bighorn.

Grant Marsh was the steamer captain. Born in 1834, he was a cabin boy at age twelve. He was a deckhand in St. Louis, Missouri, at age eighteen, and a first mate with Samuel Clemens—"Mark Twain"—in 1858. By 1876 he was one of the most popular and successful captains on the Missouri.

The United States Army leased the *Far West*—a 190-foot vessel with a passenger capacity of thirty—for the 1876 campaign against the Sioux. The wounded of the Seventh Cavalry reached the steamer by June 30, five days after the battle. By July 3 Marsh had ferried them to the north bank of the Yellowstone; then he sped the steamer down to Bismarck, 710 miles in fifty-four hours.

After 1876 Marsh no longer commanded the steamer, and it became part of the Lower Missouri River trade, running between St. Louis and Rocheport, Missouri. On October 20, 1883, while headed for St. Louis, she struck a snag in Mullanphy Bend, seven miles below St. Charles. The *Far West* sank and the boat and cargo were lost.

The Real Virginian?

William Johnston, of Midvale, Idaho, recently told me of a cemetery at Lava Hot Springs, Idaho, where a sign above a grave proclaims "Here lies the Virginian." Several people claimed to be the model for *The Virginian,* Owen Wister's classic novel about the West, but who was the real Virginian?

Could he have been a Mr Kyger, whom frontier diarist John Hunton respected and admired? Hunton, a Confederate Civil War veteran from Virginia who became a successful rancher, noted in his diary on

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November 20, 1880, "Fixed hay racks etc. George Drake come. S. Hovey here tonight. Mr. Kyger, one of Searight's foreman, here and knows many people in Valley of Va. that I do."

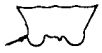
Who was the Virginian? Was it Mr. Kyger? Wister went west in 1885 for his health and stayed there for many years. He never said who was the model for the Virginian; he created his characters from the many people he met in the West. This is not to say that Wister could not have known Hunton or Kyger.

Movie Stars

Some lawmen—and outlaws—of the West were still around in the early twentieth century. A number of them got involved with movie production when motion pictures started becoming popular. Bill Ward, Kailua, Oahu, Hawaii, is looking for a couple of their films.

Oklahoma outlaw Al Jennings made a movie called *Beating Back,* in which he portrayed outlaws as heroes and lawmen as bunglers. In response, old-time lawman Bill Tilghman made a movie called *The Passing of the Oklahoma Outlaw.* Tilghman incorporated the Eagle Film Company on December 23, 1914, with E.D. Nix as president, Tilghman as vice-president, and Chris Madsen as secretary. Tilghman intended the film to be a moral lesson for young people. He held a preview in May 1915, and, according to the *Oklahoma City Times,* the film's "inaugural exhibition" was in the Overholser Theater in Oklahoma City, June 10, 1915.

As far as I know, no copies of either film exist. If prints do exist, I would appreciate hearing from anyone with information about them.



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Riding the Flume

By PETER HILDEBRANDT

"The drive through Washoe Valley," said *New York Tribune* correspondent H.J. Ramsdell, "and along the mountains up and down for 16 miles, over a road which for picturesqueness is without an equal in my memory, cannot be described." Little did he know that he would soon experience the same rugged landscape in a whole new way.

The reporter toured the area around Virginia City, Nevada, in August 1875 to write a story about the mines of the Comstock Lode. Looking inside the mines, Ramsdell asked where all the lumber for supports came from. After all, the slopes surrounding town were devoid of everything but jackrabbits and sagebrush.

"It comes," said a Mr. MacKay, Ramsdell's guide, "from our land in the Sierras forty or fifty miles from here. We own over 12,000 acres around Washoe Lake."

Ramsdell persisted. "How do you get it here?" he asked.

"It comes in our own flume," said MacKay, "down the mountains fifteen miles and from our dumping ground is brought by the Virginia and Truckee Railroad to this city. You ought to see the flume before you go back; it is really a wonderful thing."

Two days later at four in the morning Ramsdell rattled up the mountain roads in a buggy. Accompanying him were lumber mill owners James G. Fair and James C. Flood, both millionaires, and a Mr. Hereford, superintendent of the Pacific Wood, Lumber and Flume Company.

"That beautiful purple atmosphere or mist, which has a dreamy sleepy effect in the landscape," said Ramsdell, "overspread the mountains and extended through the valleys. The road we traversed swung round and round the mountains, now going nearly to the summits, and now descending to their bases."

...the grade cannot be regulated as it can on a railroad; you cannot go fast or slow at pleasure, you are wholly at the mercy of the waters. You cannot stop; you cannot lessen your speed; you have nothing to hold to; you have only to sit still, shut your eyes, say your prayers, take all the water that comes—filling your boat.

After breakfast they climbed the last quarter of a mile to the beginning of the flume. Timber sixteen inches square and ten feet long was starting its watery run twenty feet above the ground in a V-shaped flume built on a trestle.

Ramsdell marveled at the speed of the logs even at the start of the trip. "The velocity of the movement of the timber would scarcely be credited for it requires only from 25 minutes to half an hour for it to float the length of the flume, 15 miles."

Two-inch planks nailed together created the two-and-one-half-foot-wide log flume cascading down the Sierras. It had to be well built, or speeding logs would compound any fault in the construction. Where planks came together careful fitting smoothed out any unevenness. Hunter's Creek, twenty miles away, fed the trough, and feeders added extra water wherever needed.

In a typical ten-hour day, 500,000 feet of lumber—500 cords—roared down the flume until an iron brake at the end caught it. Men with crowbars skillfully flipped the logs to the ground where they piled up, fifty to one hundred at a time.

"It was like a rushing herd of buffalo on a party of hunters," Ramsdell said, climbing the trestlework at the top. "I preferred to view the flume in active working from a distance."

Eighteen to twenty miles from the start of the flume a sawmill employed 400 to 500 men to cut, saw, and haul the timber. Ramsdell hadn't a clue how the heavy mill machinery reached the mountaintop.

Virgin forests with trees two to four feet thick fed the Comstock Mines and Virginia City. In just five minutes the workers could reduce one of those giants to planks, scantling, boards, and square timber—wood so perfect little went to waste.

The lower mill ran day and night, spewing out 50,000 to 70,000 feet of lumber per day. A smaller, upper mill turned out half that, running twelve hours per day.

The flume was the only way to supply such mills. To handle the loads, the trestle below the flume had to be strong. In fact, the structure could support a narrow-gauge railway with ease. The flume traversed all the awesome terrain Ramsdell had just traveled. With a 3,700-foot vertical drop, it twisted

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and turned to cover the tortuous landscape. It ran through valleys, over foothills, around mountains, and across canyons. One cross-canyon trip bore the flume seventy feet above the ground.

The flume consisted of hundreds of sixteen-foot-long sections strung together. At its steepest it fell three feet for every six feet traveled. Two hundred men spent ten weeks building the structure, using two million feet of lumber and 56,000 pounds of nails.

After the upper mill, Ramsdell inspected the lower mill with Hereford, the man responsible for the flume's planning and construction. When Ramsdell made it back to the flume, Flood and Fair were waiting for him—with a shaky-looking "boat."

"I was challenged to go with them" said Ramsdell. "Indeed the proposition was put this way—they dared me to go. I thought if men worth $25,000,000 or $30,000,000 apiece could afford to risk their lives, I could afford to risk mine which isn't worth half as much."

Workers hauled the boats to the flume's end. The boats looked more like glorified pig troughs. Their front ends were V-shaped to match the flume, they had narrow wooden bars for seats.

Fair and Ramsdell took the first boat, Hereford and Flood the second. Getting skittish at the last minute, Fair asked for someone who knew about flumes to accompany them. Of the fifty men milling around the mountaintop, just one volunteered. He was "a red-faced carpenter, who takes more kindly to whisky than to his bench," said Ramsdell.

"HANG ON to your hats," someone yelled, and then "Go!"

"The boat was launched, and we jumped into it as best we could, which was not very well, and away we went like the wind.

"One man who helped launch the boat, fell into it just as the water struck it, but he scampered out on the trestle, and whether he was hurt or not we could not wait to see."

Then came a half hour none aboard would ever forget. "The terrors of that ride can never be blotted from the memory," said Ramsdell.

Icy water drenched them, flowing in the open-ended bow as they flew at speeds they would all later disagree on. Ramsdell thought a ride on a train's cowcatcher down a steep grade would be relatively tame compared to the flume ride. At least a train rested firmly on iron rails with grooved wheels and had wide tracks and skilled brakemen.

"BUT A FLUME," he said, "had no element of safety. In the first place the grade cannot be regulated as it can on a railroad; you cannot go fast or slow at pleasure, you are wholly at the mercy of the waters. You cannot stop; you cannot lessen your speed; you have nothing to hold to; you have only to sit still, shut your eyes, say your prayers, take all the water that comes—filling your boat. I cannot give the reader a better idea of a flume ride than to compare it to riding down an old-fashioned eaves-trough at an angle of 45 degrees, hanging in midair without support of roof or house, and extending a distance of 15 miles."

In the front of Ramsdell's craft the red-faced carpenter clung to the bottom and Fair sat on a seat behind him. The reporter sat in the stern; Fair's broad shoulders sheltered Ramsdell from the torrent sweeping up from the bow.

"I was perched up in a boat no wider than a chair," he said, struggling for words to describe it, "sometimes 20 feet high, sometimes 70 feet high. When the water would enable me to look ahead I would see this trestle here and there for miles, so small and so narrow and apparently so fragile I could only compare it to a chalk mark upon which, hung in the air, I was running at a rate unknown upon railroads."

At the height of its speed, Ramsdell's boat struck something stuck in the bottom of the track. The carpenter flew ten feet ahead into the flume. Fair landed flat on

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his face and Ramsdell in the center of Fair's back. Fair grabbed the carpenter by the collar and hauled him back up in their boat, crushing his fingers between the flume and the boat.

"It seemed an hour before we arrived at the worst place in the flume," said Ramsdell, "and yet Hereford tells me it was less than ten minutes."

There the angle steepened to forty-five degrees. Looking straight out it felt like a free fall. In spite of a feeling of impending death, Ramsdell wanted to know their speed. "So I lay close to Fair and placed my head between his shoulders. The water was coming into his face like the breakers of the ocean. When we went slow the breakers came in on my back, but when the heavy grades were reached the breakers were in front. In one case Fair shielded me, in the other I shielded Fair.

"I huddled close to Fair and turned my eyes toward the hills. Every object I placed my eye on was gone before I could clearly see what it was. Mountains passed like visions and shadows. It was with difficulty that I could get my breath. I felt that I did not weigh a hundred pounds, although I knew in the sharpness of intellect which one has at such a moment that the scales turned at two hundred."

AT THE END of the flume the second boat crashed into Ramsdell's, throwing Flood on his face into the water.

How fast had they gone? "We made the entire distance in less time than a railroad train would ordinarily make, and a portion of the distance we went faster than a railroad train ever went. Fair said we went at least a mile a minute; Flood said we went at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, and my deliberate belief is that we went at a rate that annihilated time and space."

The men were more angry than exhilarated. "Flood said he would not make the trip again for the whole Consolidated Virginia Mine. Fair said that he should never again place himself on an equality with timber and wood, and Hereford said he was sorry he ever built the flume. As for myself, I told the millionaires that I had accepted my last challenge."

Who knows how the red-faced carpenter felt.

"What am I to do with my spoiled suit of English clothes?" Ramsdell asked.

"Your clothes are good enough to give away, Mr. Ramsdell." said Flood.

Neither he nor Fair could move out of bed the next morning. "For myself," reported Ramsdell, "I have only the strength to say that I have had enough of flumes."

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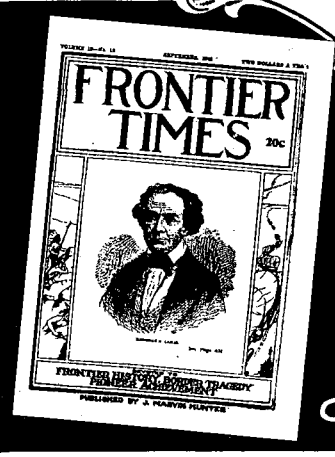

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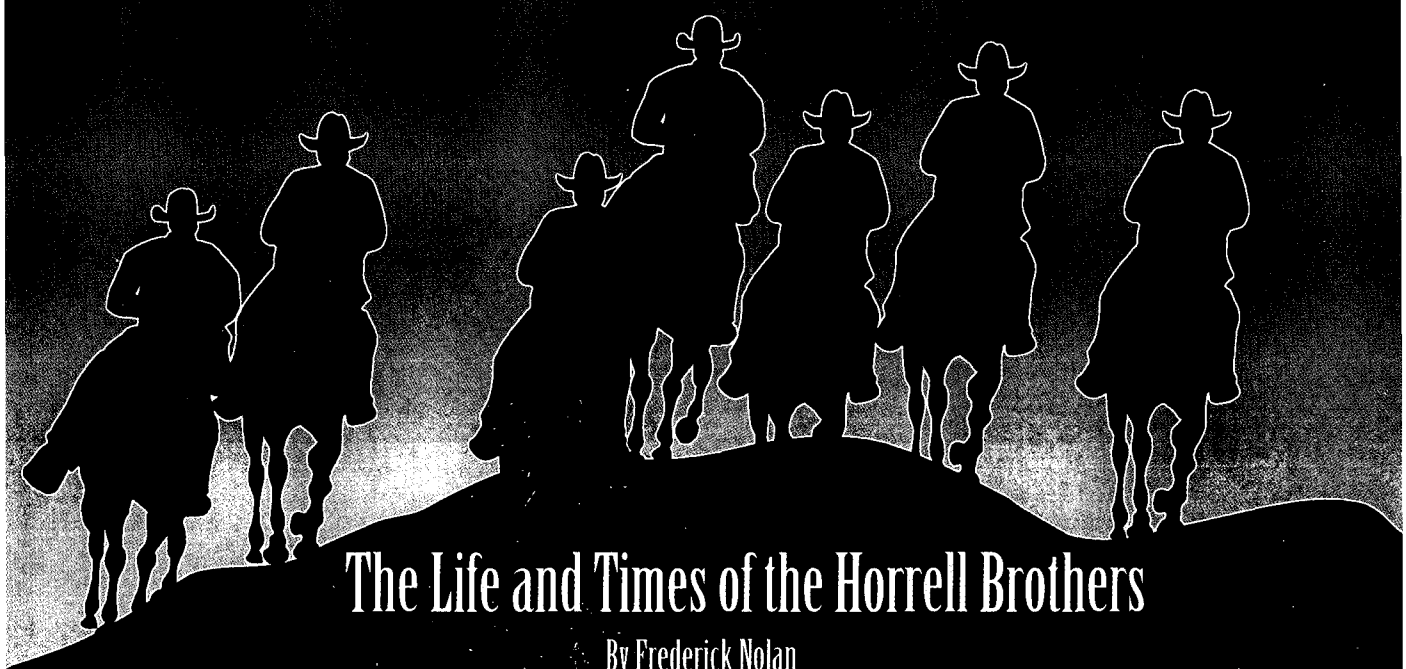

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